

British Trade Minister Visits

LONDON (Reuters) – British trade minister Kemi Badenoch will visit Washington on Monday to meet politicians and address business representatives to try to boost ties with the United States even as talks over a free trade deal have stalled.

A U.S. free trade deal was touted as the one of the biggest prizes for Britain leaving the

European Union. But hopes of a quick agreement were dashed when the incoming Biden administration put all free trade talks on ice.

Badenoch's office said she would emphasize the need to promote strong trading alliances to challenge the threat of authoritarian states. She will also say Britain and the United States should work together

on issues such as protecting long-term energy security and strengthening supply chains.

"Both the UK and the U.S. know we cannot have security at home without security abroad, and we need to make the global economy resilient to future shocks," Badenoch said in a statement.

The British trade department said Badenoch was due to meet with politicians, including U.S. Treasury Deputy Secretary Wally Adeyemo, and speak at a business roundtable event.

In the absence of a broader trade deal with the United States, Britain has been working to secure memorandums of understanding with individual states.

Agreements were signed with Indiana and North Carolina earlier this year and talks are ongoing with several other states including Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and Washington.

The state-level MOUs have been criticized by the opposition Labour Party as being no substitute for a full U.S.-UK trade deal.



TED BUDD

CHERI BEASLEY

Beasley Loses Bid For Senate

By Gary D. Robertson

Associated Press

Republican U.S. Rep. Ted Budd won North Carolina's open Senate seat on Tuesday, defeating Cheri Beasley while extending a losing streak for state Democrats seeking a spot in that chamber.

Budd, a three-term congressman, will succeed retiring GOP Sen. Richard Burr, who entered the Senate in 2005.

As a candidate endorsed by Donald Trump and ready to embrace the former president's support, Budd will provide a more hardline conservative voice in the Senate than Burr, who voted in 2021 to convict Trump at his impeachment trial related to the Jan. 6 Capitol riot.

Beasley, a former chief justice of the state Supreme Court attempting to be the state's first Black senator, fell short despite having a significant fundraising advantage over Budd's campaign. But national Republicans came to Budd's defense with a large wave of spending attacking her judicial record and support for President Joe Biden's policies.

"It's time now to put the brakes on the Biden agenda of reckless spending, overregulation and higher taxes," Budd during his speech to supporters late Tuesday night in Winston-Salem. "It's time to fully support the men and women of law enforcement who keep us safe each and every day."

Beasley's defeat means Democrats have now lost seven of the eight Senate elections this century; their only victory

coming in 2008. While North Carolina statewide elections are usually closely divided affairs, Democrats have won all but one gubernatorial election since 1992.

The Senate Leadership Fund, which is linked to Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., alone spent \$38 million against Beasley, along with other conservative groups whose spending effectively canceled out her fundraising edge. The Democrats' Senate Majority PAC committed to spending well less than half of that amount.

Budd was relentless during the fall campaign in attempting to link Beasley to Biden, saying last month that "she would be an absolute rubber stamp for everything that's led to this country being on the wrong track."

David Goodall, 51, of Apex, said he voted on Tuesday for Budd and other Republicans "because of the craziness that's going coming out of Washington, D.C., right now—all the inflation,

the craziness, the overspending, just the ridiculousness that's coming from the left party."

It was Trump's June 2021 endorsement in the GOP primary that over time helped him win the nomination in 34-point rout over former Gov. Pat McCrory. The former president held rallies on Budd's behalf in April and September, designed to intensify the candidate's conservative base. Budd thanked Trump briefly in his speech Tuesday night.

During his only televised debate with Beasley, Budd said Biden was the legitimately elected president but defended voting in the House in early 2021 to attempt to delay the 2020 presidential election certification.

Beasley said Budd "aligned himself with somebody who is truly extremist" by embracing Trump. But Budd said the ex-president "had a lot of wins here in the state, including for our

(See **BEASLEY LOSES**, P. 2)



Cooper Veto Power Still Intact

By Gary D. Robertson

Associated Press

North Carolina Republicans appeared to fall just short of gaining a large enough majority in the state's General Assembly elections to override Gov. Roy Cooper's vetoes on their own. But, their seat gains eroded further the Democrats' ability to block bills on abortion and other highly contested legislation in the governor's final two years in office.

Republican legislative leaders celebrated on Wednesday winning a handful of additional seats, which they say is evidence that the public likes their economic and education agenda. But while the Senate GOP increased their seats in the 50-seat chamber from 28 to 30—the number needed to have a veto-proof majority come January—Speaker Tim Moore said Republicans were one seat shy of a similar power threshold in the House.

Republicans won 70 House seats and were narrowly leading in one more race. That and another House race led by a Democrat remained too early for The Associated Press to call as of Wednesday afternoon. Seventy-

two seats are needed for a veto-proof margin.

The results could mean Republican leaders won't be able to successfully override Cooper's vetoes at will—even if GOP lawmakers are united—unless they get help from at least one Demo-



crat. Cooper is barred by term limits from reelection in 2024.

In the past four years without Republican veto-proof majorities, none of Cooper's 47 vetoes have been overridden. They included vetoes on legislation designed to loosen gun laws and COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and make limited abortion changes.

Having veto-proof majorities in both chambers would have given Republicans the ability to pass policy prescriptions without having to persuade Cooper and his fellow Democrats to support them. Moore downplayed the seat shortfall.

"Of course I would like 72. But I will tell you, for all intents and purposes, we have a governing supermajority," Moore said. "We have a handful of Democrats who work with us. We have some new members coming in. And I feel completely confident that should we need to override vetoes, we'll be able to do our part (in) the House as well."

Getting Democratic assistance on abortion restrictions, which Republicans have said they are prepared to consider next year in light of the U.S. Supreme Court striking down Roe v. Wade, could be different. Cooper, Democratic candidates and abortion-rights groups campaigned on or spent millions of dollars warning voters that Republicans could pass severe abortion restrictions if they gained veto-proof majorities.

Cooper tweeted late Tuesday

(See **COOPER VETO**, P. 2)

Wiley Nickel Wins The 13th District Seat

By Hannah Schoenbaum

Associated Press/Report for America

North Carolina Democratic state Sen. Wiley Nickel defeated Republican political newcomer Bo Hines for an open U.S. House seat in a competitive district along Raleigh's southern border, marking one of Democrats' few major successes in the Southern swing state.

With Nickel's win in the 13th District, and another Democratic victory in the new 14th District, North Carolina Democrats flipped one seat and gained another, bringing the state's representation in Congress to a 7-7 tie.

Nickel, who has served Raleigh and nearby Cary in the state Sen-

ate since 2019, will represent the urban, suburban and rural communities of the newly redrawn and relocated 13th District.

"I got into this to build a better world for my kids, and that's the message that we took to every voter in this district," Nickel said in a speech Tuesday night.

His opponent, a 27-year-old former college football player who had former President Donald Trump's endorsement, had relocated to the district from Winston-Salem just a month before the May primary.

"I want to congratulate Wiley Nickel," Hines said Tuesday night. "I hope he loves this community as much as I do."

North Carolina Republicans

held eight seats heading into this year, and Democrats held five. But several districts in this election cycle bore little resemblance to their previous iterations after a lengthy redistricting battle scrambled the state's congressional map to account for the new 14th seat it was awarded following the 2020 census.

Regarded as one of the nation's few battlegrounds for congressional control, the 13th stretches from the southern border of the capital city beltline to the farm land outside Goldsboro.

Republican U.S. Rep. Ted Budd, North Carolina's new senator-elect, is vacating the seat, but the 13th he currently represents shares no common ground with

its new form. The recent relocation situated the state's marquee race between Nickel and Hines in uncharted territory for both parties.

The two spent the campaign cycle accusing the other of extreme views while trying to paint themselves as moderate enough to represent the district's diverse constituency.

At a polling location in Holly Springs, a Raleigh suburb that epitomizes the district's narrow partisan divide, voters said they are less focused on the individual candidates and more focused on the national parties' agendas.

Mark Swanson, a 50-year-old

(See **NICKEL**, P. 2)

NC Central To Receive \$2M R & D Grant

Codetta® Biosciences, the life sciences company advancing and expanding research and diagnostic capabilities with its fully integrated, multi-omic platform, announced today that the North Carolina Collaboratory has awarded Codetta and North Carolina Central University (NCCU) a \$2 million research and development grant, aimed to dramatically impact COVID related research and future clinical care.

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), also known as COVID-19, persists as a challenging world health crisis. Prevention, diagnosis, and treatment hinge

on the ability to effectively detect SARS-CoV-2 and related health implications effectively and efficiently. Therefore, Codetta and the NCCU Advanced Center for COVID-19 Related Disparities (ACCORD) will collaborate to make technologies for detection of COVID and assessment of COVID related health issues more accessible and efficient.

The Research Triangle Park, North Carolina based start-up is developing an integrated platform of reagents, hardware, and software designed to enable highly multiplexed, quantitative, simultaneous multi-omic analyses. In collaboration with NCCU,

Codetta will use the funding from the North Carolina Collaboratory to enable detection of a panel of respiratory infectious diseases, as well as severity of host response and potential impact of long-COVID.

"We are privileged to be collaborating with Dr. Deepak Kumar and colleagues at NCCU ACCORD," said TJ Johnson, CEO at Codetta. "This initiative directly aligns with Codetta's purpose, to bring highly-complex medical and non-medical molecular testing to people and places everywhere."

The North Carolina Collaboratory awarded NCCU and Codetta the grant through their Busi-

ness-Academic Partnership Program, aimed to address the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19 in North Carolina.

"The ability to research and diagnose infections with clinically similar presentation to COVID-19 and rapidly identify those at high risk for more serious health implications, both short and long term, will provide a powerful tool to bring improved health care across North Carolina and beyond," said Dr. Deepak Kumar, Principal Investigator at NCCU. "We're looking forward to collaborating with Codetta to uncover new information about this disease and make testing more accessible to all."



NC LEGISLATORS: MEDICAID EXPANSION EFFORTS PUSHED TO 2023

(AP)—North Carolina Republican legislative leaders said Wednesday that they're shutting the idea of Medicaid expansion to 2023, rather than attempting to negotiate a bill that could be voted on before the General Assembly's current two-year edition ends in December.

By wide bipartisan margins, the House and Senate approved competing bills months ago that were designed to cover hundreds of thousands of additional low-income adults through the government's health insurance program that mostly serves the poor. Republicans within the two chambers have disagreed over whether additional health care access changes should be attached to expansion.

The General Assembly's chief work session ended in early summer, but there was optimism that an agreement could be reached by the end of the year—in particular for a short work session scheduled to start Dec. 13. Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper, a longtime expansion supporter, urged them to act.

But in speaking with reporters at a post-election news conference, Senate leader Phil Berger said there are now no plans to take up anything substantive during next month's work period, or in another three-day meeting that starts this week.

As for expansion, Moore said: "I think we'll deal with that next year." The two-year session concludes Dec. 31. Soon after, the 170 people elected to the General Assembly will begin serving through the end of 2024.

"I don't disagree that waiting until next year is the right thing to do," Berger added.

North Carolina is one of about a dozen states that haven't accepted the federal government's Medicaid offer originating from the 2010 health care law, in which Washington pays 90 percent of the medical costs. On Tuesday, voters in South Dakota passed a constitutional amendment to accept expansion, which means roughly 40,000 people would become eligible for Medicaid.

Cooper spokesperson Mary Scott Winstead cited the South Dakota vote while criticizing the delay, which she said makes North Carolina "one of the last states still searching for our compassion and common sense." The Cooper administration has said North Carolina is missing out on over \$500 million for each month that it fails to implement expansion.

"Waiting until next year is astonishingly wasteful, irresponsible and cruel, costing us lives and billions of dollars," Winstead said in an email.

Berger said months ago that the state's hospitals weren't willing to negotiate on reforms to "certificate of need" laws—something Senate Republicans considered a necessary element of any agreement. These laws require regulatory approval before certain medical buildings can be constructed or services offered in a region.

The North Carolina Healthcare Association, representing hospitals and hospital systems, disclosed in September what its leaders considered a compromise in those areas, but Berger later called the offer "not a serious proposal." Expansion talks, at least public ones, have quieted since then.

"I think we're close on some things. Other things we're not,"

(See **STATE BRIEFS**, P. 2)

Beasley Loses Senate Bid—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

economy.”

Beasley, who was the first Black woman to serve as the state's chief justice, told supporters early Wednesday that she had spoken to Budd and congratulated him.

“This is not the outcome that we wanted, but we have made history in North Carolina,” Beasley said, adding later that the “fight will continue because progress continues.”

Beasley attempted to generate support from unaffiliated and Republican women who were

fearful of Budd's anti-abortion stance in light of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in June striking down Roe v. Wade. Budd has signed on to many restrictive abortion measures since coming to Washington, including a recently proposed 15-week national ban. She also said his congressional voting record was out-of-step with North Carolina voters by opposing legislation designed to control health care costs and to build infrastructure.

Beasley voter Terry Hough, 71, of Apex, said on Tuesday that she

was concerned about the economy's current path, but the threat to abortion was preeminent in her mind this fall.

Beasley “feels that it's up to the woman. It's ‘my body, my choice,’” Hough said. “It's a personal right, a personal freedom that was taken away.”

Nickel Wins 13th District Seat—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

unaffiliated voter who cast his ballot for Nickel, said he doesn't believe Republican control of Congress will improve the economy, noting that the pandemic illuminated long-term flaws in the global supply chain.

“I can't vote Republican right now,” Swanson said. “What's their solution to anything? They just complain about the economy stuff but, what, tax cuts and deregulation is going to solve all those problems? It's not true. They've been doing that for years and it hasn't done a damn thing.”

Aaron Wenzel, a 47-year-old registered Republican who voted for Hines, said he tends to sup-

Budd, 51, grew up in Davie County and previously worked in the family's janitorial and landscaping business. He and his father also created a company to invest in agricultural businesses. Today he owns a gun store and range.

Budd had never run for pub-

lic office in 2016 when he won a 17-candidate Republican primary for the 13th Congressional District seat and later the general election. He benefited from support from the Club for Growth super PAC, which also helped him in this year's Senate primary.

As a U.S. House member, Budd

has served on the Financial Services Committee—an important panel for North Carolina, the home of Bank of America Corp.'s headquarters.

Libertarian Shannon Bray and Green Party candidate Matthew Hoh also were on Tuesday's Senate ballot.

STATE BRIEFS

Continued from page 1

Moore said about negotiations, adding that “a more comprehensive discussion” on the issues will probably occur next year.

While Republicans made gains in both the House and Senate in Tuesday election, they failed to win enough seats to successfully override a Cooper veto on their own. While the Senate reached a veto-proof margin for the GOP, Republicans appeared to be one seat short of a similar threshold in the House.

DEMOCRAT DON DAVIS WINS ELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 1ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Democrat Don Davis wins election to U.S. House in North Carolina's 1st Congressional District.

DEMOCRAT DEBORAH ROSS WINS REELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 2ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Democrat Deborah Ross wins reelection to U.S. House in North Carolina's 2nd Congressional District.

REPUBLICAN GREG MURPHY WINS REELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 3RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Republican Greg Murphy wins reelection to U.S. House in North Carolina's 3rd Congressional District.

DEMOCRAT VALERIE FOUSHEE WINS ELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Democrat Valerie Foushee wins election to U.S. House in North Carolina's 4th Congressional District.

REPUBLICAN VIRGINIA FOXX WINS REELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 5TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Republican Virginia Foxx wins reelection to U.S. House in North Carolina's 5th Congressional District.

DEMOCRAT KATHY MANNING WINS REELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 6TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Democrat Kathy Manning wins reelection to U.S. House in North Carolina's 6th Congressional District.

REPUBLICAN DAVID ROUZER WINS REELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 7TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Republican David Rouzer wins reelection to U.S. House in North Carolina's 7th Congressional District.

REPUBLICAN DAN BISHOP WINS REELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 8TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Republican Dan Bishop wins reelection to U.S. House in North Carolina's 8th Congressional District.

REPUBLICAN RICHARD HUDSON WINS REELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 9TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Republican Richard Hudson wins reelection to U.S. House in North Carolina's 9th Congressional District.

REPUBLICAN PATRICK MCHENRY WINS REELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 10TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Republican Patrick McHenry wins reelection to U.S. House in North Carolina's 10th Congressional District.

REPUBLICAN CHUCK EDWARDS WINS ELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 11TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Republican Chuck Edwards wins election to U.S. House in North Carolina's 11th Congressional District.

DEMOCRAT ALMA ADAMS WINS REELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 12TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Democrat Alma Adams wins reelection to U.S. House in North Carolina's 12th Congressional District.

DEMOCRAT JEFF JACKSON WINS ELECTION TO U.S. HOUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA'S 14TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—Democrat Jeff Jackson wins election to U.S. House in North Carolina's 14th Congressional District.

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Cooper Veto Power Intact—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

night that “North Carolinians voted for balance and progress” and that he'll keep working with the legislature “to support a growing economy, more clean energy, better health care and strong public schools.”

At a Wednesday news conference outside the Legislative Building, abortion-rights advocates said it's crucial Democratic lawmakers stick together to back Cooper.

“It's a razor-thin margin,” Jillian Riley of Planned Parenthood Votes! South Atlantic said. “Any politician that interprets the results of this election as a mandate to pass a ban on abortion is gravely misreading the electorate.”

Moore and Senate leader Phil Berger said on Wednesday that discussions haven't yet occurred about what to do on abortion,

which is currently prohibited in North Carolina after 20 weeks of pregnancy, with some narrow exceptions.

“We'll see what is possible for us to do, if anything, but no decision has been made on that,” Berger said. He's said previously that he would favor restrictions on abortion after roughly the first three months of pregnancy. Moore has said he personally supports preventing abortions once cardiac activity can be detected by the ultrasound of an embryo, which can be as early as six weeks into a pregnancy.

The state constitution's rules require 60 percent of the members present in each chamber to vote to override for one to be successful, so absences can adjust the vote margins necessary.

Cooper's current run of successful vetoes reflect his ability

to corral fellow Democrats when in a pinch.

“Cooper's the right person to hold things together, but one vote is just one vote,” said Mac McCorkle, a Duke University public policy professor and former adviser to two previous North Carolina Democratic governors.

House Minority Leader Robert Reives of Chatham County said on Wednesday that some fellow Democrats may be less inclined to cross over to help Republicans after what he called a nasty campaign season.

Senate Republicans expanded their majority in part by unseating longtime Sen. Toby Fitch of Wilson County, who lost to former GOP Sen. Buck Newton. They also managed to hold a competitive seat in New Hanover County by getting GOP Sen. Michael Lee reelected. And Repub-

lican Sen. Bobby Hanig defeated Democrat Valerie Jordan in a northeastern district.

Democrats won a pair of Senate seats fully or partially within Wake County where abortion had become a top issue. Sen. Sydney Batch defeated Marc Cavaliero, while Mary Wills Bode won over E.C. Sykes.

In the House, Republicans were successful in unseating a handful of incumbent Democrats. They include Reps. Howard Hunter III of Hertford County; James Gailliard of Nash County; Terry Garrison of Vance County; and Ricky Hurtado of Alamance County. Redistricting forced pairs of Republican incumbents to run for the same seat in the May primary, decreasing the number of those who could return to Raleigh in 2023.

Plan For Green Finance Meets Resistance

When it comes to helping poor nations cope with climate change, the United States government left its wallet at home. So it hopes its friend, big business, can help pick up the tab.

Unable to persuade Congress or the American public to spend billions of dollars more a year in climate financial aid, the U.S. government is trying to make it easier for private corporations to send cash to the developing world in exchange for looking green at home.

The plan, announced Wednesday by U.S. climate envoy John Kerry at the COP27 climate summit in Egypt, essentially amounts to tapping private funds to finance developing nations' transition to clean energy by selling “high quality” carbon credits to companies trying to make their

carbon emissions “net zero.”

“Our intention is to put the carbon market to work, to deploy capital otherwise unemployable, to speed the transition from dirty to clean power,” and replace dirty coal-fired power plants with renewable energy sources, Kerry said at a launch event.

But the idea faced stiff resistance from environmental groups and climate experts, who said it would give polluters a license to keep polluting. It came a day after the United Nations warned about shady carbon credits that businesses count on to meet their net-zero targets.

Underscoring the opposition, an activist heckled Kerry as he launched the plan, accusing him of “promoting false solutions,” before security guards pushed him away. At this year's COP

summit, poorer nations have lambasted wealthier ones for not putting up enough money to finance their so-called green transition.

The developing world needs hundreds of billions of dollars to help them ditch coal, oil and natural gas, but the United States Congress has been reluctant to spend much in financial aid.

“If we don't find more money ... we ain't going to get this done,” Kerry said of the fight against climate change.

Kerry's proposal is dubbed the Energy Transition Accelerator and is backed by two major philanthropies, The Rockefeller Foundation and the Bezos Earth Fund. They hope it could unlock \$100 billion or more in financing for green projects by 2030. Kerry said he wants to have it up

and running by next year's COP meeting.

Details about how it will work are still sparse, but under the plan, verified greenhouse gas emission reductions would be generated that could then be sold as carbon credits. Kerry said there's been “strong interest” to buy them from corporations including PepsiCo and Microsoft.

There would be “strong safeguards” on who could buy the credits, Kerry said. Buyers, “not including fossil fuel companies,” will need a goal for getting to net-zero carbon dioxide emissions and a science-based interim target on the way to meeting that goal, he said. The credits can't be used as substitutes for making deep cuts to their own emissions but as an extra boost to those efforts.

Democrats Buck Midterm History, Win States

By David A. Lieb

Associated Press

Bucking historic midterm election trends, Democrats wrested control of state legislative chambers away from Republicans in Michigan and Minnesota while also gaining full control of state capitols in Maryland and Massachusetts.

The Democrats' gains in Tuesday's elections gave them power to set the agenda on topics ranging from state taxes and spending to contentious social issues in four states that previously had politically divided governments.

Democrats also gained legislative seats in Pennsylvania, another important presidential swing state where Republican lawmakers have held majorities against a Democratic governor.

Future control of several legislatures—including Republican-led Arizona's and Democratic-led Nevada's—remained unclear at press time as votes were still being counted. The New Hampshire House clerk said results show an almost even partisan divide in the 400-member chamber. That could set the stage for either unprecedented bipartisanship or major gridlock.

Democrats were thrilled with the results so far, especially since the president's party almost always suffers legislative losses during midterm elections. “By all accounts, this election should have been a landslide for Republicans. Instead, their so-called red wave is looking more like a puddle,” said Jessica Post, president of the national Demo-

cratic Legislative Campaign Committee.

Republicans entered the election with full control of both legislative chambers and the governor's office in 23 states, compared to 14 for Democrats, with the rest divided.

Democrats already controlled both legislative chambers in Maryland and Massachusetts but picked up their governorships by capturing seats being vacated by Republicans.

Even with Democratic gains, Republicans still will control more states and more total legislative seats.

Only twice since 1900 had the president's party posted a net increase in state legislative seats during a midterm election—in 1934 during the Great Depression and in 2002, a year after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

This year, “it's becoming apparent that if either side gains seats, it's going to be a narrow margin relative to history,” said Ben Williams, the NCSL's principal for elections and redistricting.

Republicans said going into the election that they would be happy to keep what they held, though they had targeted several states for potential gains.

Despite some losses, Republicans withstood bigger Democratic spending in some states and “an incredibly challenging political environment” to maintain a majority of state legislatures, said Andrew Romeo, communications director for the Republican State Leadership Committee.

A summertime U.S. Supreme

Court's decision ending a half-century of national abortion rights—and returning the issue to states—gave Democrats a new campaign theme to counter Republican ads blaming Democrats for rising inflation and economic concerns.

In Michigan, voters passed a state constitutional amendment guaranteeing abortion rights while narrowly electing Democratic legislative majorities. Lawmakers were running for the first time in new districts drawn by an independent citizens committee that gave Democrats a better chance than the previous districts draw by the GOP-led Legislature.

When newly elected lawmakers take office along with Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, it will mark the first time in 40 years that Democrats wield full control of Michigan government.

State Sen. Jeremy Moss, campaign co-chair for Michigan's Senate Democrats, said voters would see a different policy focus.

“We really have to restore the dignity of Michigan's middle and working class,” Moss said. “That includes uplifting labor rights. That includes reversing this tax shift that Republicans placed upon them. That includes pushing forward on equal protection under the law.”

Though the economy was the top issue for Michigan voters, a majority also said the abortion ballot initiative was very important and that their views aligned most closely with the idea that abortion should be legal in all or most cases, according to AP VoteCast, an expansive survey of more than 3,200 of the state's

voters.

Republican House Speaker Jason Wentworth attributed the loss to redistricting and “special interests from all over the country” that aided Democrats. He predicted that Republicans would regain the chamber in two years.

In Minnesota, Democrats won control of the state Senate from Republicans while also defending their House majority against a Republican takeover attempt. Democratic Gov. Tim Walz also won reelection.

Democratic lawmakers said Wednesday that their agenda could include codifying abortion rights, legalizing recreational marijuana and increasing education funding, among other things.

Amy Koch, a former Republican Minnesota Senate majority leader turned political strategist, said the GOP should have won Tuesday. But she said Republicans failed to appeal to women who opposed the Supreme Court's abortion ruling and “were just upset with the GOP brand.”

“If Republicans don't address that, we are never going to win statewide,” Koch said.

Republicans controlled both of Pennsylvania's legislative chambers heading into the election. But Democrats made significant gains in the House, with some Democrats even predicting the chamber could flip their way by the time all the votes are counted.

The political shift was aided by more favorable districts drawn by four top lawmakers and a tie-breaking outsider, a slew of Republican retirements and victories by Democrats in high-profile races for governor and U.S. Senate.

Business & Finance

What Is Happening At Bankrupt Crypto Exchange FTX?

The imploding cryptocurrency trading firm FTX is now short billions of dollars after experiencing the crypto equivalent of a bank run.

The exchange, formerly one of the world's largest, sought bankruptcy protection last week, and its CEO and founder resigned. Hours later, the trading firm said there had been "unauthorized access" and that funds had disappeared. Analysts say hundreds of millions of dollars may have vanished.

The unraveling of the once-giant exchange is sending shockwaves through the industry. Here's a look at the company's collapse so far:

WHY DID FTX GO BANKRUPT?

Customers fled the exchange over fears about whether FTX had sufficient capital, and it agreed to sell itself to rival crypto exchange Binance. But the deal fell through while Binance's due diligence on FTX's balance sheet was still pending.

FTX had valued its assets between \$10 billion to \$50 billion, and listed more than 130 affiliated companies around the world, according to its bankruptcy filing.

FTX and dozens of affiliated companies — including founder Sam Bankman-Fried's hedge fund, Alameda Research — filed the bankruptcy petition in Delaware on Friday.

The week's developments marked a shocking turn of

events for Bankman-Fried, who was hailed as somewhat of a savior earlier this year when he helped shore up a number of cryptocurrency companies that ran into financial trouble. He was recently estimated to be worth \$23 billion and has been a prominent political donor to Democrats.

WAS IT HACKED, TOO?

FTX confirmed Saturday there had been unauthorized access to its accounts, hours after the company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

A debate formed on social media about whether the exchange was hacked or a company insider had stolen funds — a possibility that cryptocurrency analysts couldn't rule out.

Exactly how much money is involved is unclear, but analytics firm Elliptic estimated Saturday that \$477 million was missing from the exchange. FTX's new CEO John Ray III said it was switching off the ability to trade or withdraw funds and taking steps to secure customers' assets.

IS MY BITCOIN SAFE?

People who own bitcoin should be OK if they keep them off exchanges such as FTX that effectively work as a "cryptocurrency gambling website," said Cory Klippsten, the CEO of financial services firm Swan Bitcoin.

"Any exchange is a security risk," said Klippsten. Some are more reputable than others, but he said a better option is



to take control of your digital assets. "With bitcoin, you have the option to take self-custody and take your coins off the exchange," he said.

IS FTX UNDER INVESTIGATION?

The Royal Bahamas Police Force said Sunday it is investigating FTX, adding to the company's woes. The police force said in a statement Sunday it was working with Bahamas securities regulators to "investigate if any criminal misconduct occurred" involving the

exchange, which had moved its headquarters to the Caribbean country last year.

IS ANYONE ELSE INVESTIGATING?

Even before the bankruptcy

filing and missing funds, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission began examining FTX to determine whether any criminal activity or securities

offenses were committed, according to a person familiar with matter who spoke to The Associated Press last week on condition of anonymity because they could not discuss details of the investigations publicly.

WHAT ARE THE REPERCUSSIONS?

Companies that backed FTX are writing down investments, and the prices of bitcoin and other digital currencies have fallen. Politicians and regulators are calling for stricter oversight of the unwieldy industry. FTX said Saturday that it was moving as many digital assets as can be identified to a new "cold wallet custodian," which is essentially a way of storing assets offline without allowing remote control.

FTX had entered into a number of sports-related deals, some of which are crumbling. The NBA's Miami Heat and Miami-Dade County decided Friday to terminate their relationship with FTX, and will rename the team's arena. Earlier Friday, Mercedes said it would immediately remove FTX logos from its Formula One cars.

EU Sets "Last" Emissions Rules

By Samuel Petrequin

Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP)—The European Union's executive arm proposed pollution standards Thursday for new combustion engine vehicles that are expected to remain on European roads well after the 27-nation bloc bans their sale in 2035.

The so-called Euro 7 standards presented by the European Commission would apply to all cars, vans, trucks and buses sold in the EU, with the aim of lowering emissions from tailpipes, brakes and tires.

EU officials said the guidelines were expected to lower nitrogen oxide emissions from cars and vans by 35 percent compared to existing exhaust emission regulations for pollutants other than carbon dioxide, and by 56 percent from buses and trucks. The standards are separate from but intended to complement the EU's climate change rules for CO₂.

The Euro 7 standards also cover harmful pollutants emitted from vehicle tailpipes, brakes and tires, including ultrafine particles, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide.

The proposal will be submitted to the European Parliament and the EU's member countries with a goal of the guidelines taking effect in July 2025 for cars and vans and July 2027 for heavy-duty vehicles.

The European Automobile Manufacturers' Association was skeptical about the implementation dates and said the proposal risks slowing the transition to transportation with zero emissions.

The group said the current standards for pollutants were stringent and argued that exhaust emissions are "at a barely measurable level thanks to state-of-the-art vehicle technology."

"Unfortunately, the environmental benefit of the commission's proposal is very limited, whereas it heavily increases the cost of vehicles," the association said.

The European Commission said the new standards could be met with existing technologies and without affecting vehicle buyers.

"A moderate impact on the costs of cars—between 90 and 150 euros—and on the cost of buses and lorries—around 2600 euros—is expected," it said.

EU lawmakers and member states reached a deal last month

to ban the sale of new gasoline and diesel cars and vans by 2035. The deal was the first agreement of the bloc's "Fit for 55" package, which the European Commission set up to achieve the goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 55 percent over this decade.

Under the deal, carmakers will be required to reduce the emissions of new cars sold by 55 percent in 2030, compared to 2021, before reaching a 100 percent cut five years later.

The EU believes that introducing new pollution norms for the last generation of combustion engines is crucial because vehicles that enter the market before the 2035 deadline would remain in service for years.

"More than 20 percent of cars and vans and more than 50 percent of the heavy-duty vehicles on our streets are expected to emit pollutants from the tailpipe up to 2050," the European Commission said. "Moreover, all vehicles, electric or not, need to emit less air pollutants, for example from brakes and tires, which are on a pathway to become the major sources of particle emissions from vehicles."

Extortionists Expose Patients Medical Records

By Rod McGuirk

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—Extortionists dumped stolen client records relating to pregnancy terminations on the dark web on Thursday in their latest effort to pressure Australia's largest health insurer to pay a ransom.

The cybercriminals began dumping customer records on Wednesday including treatments for HIV and drug addiction after Medibank this week ruled out paying a ransom for the return of the hacked data.

The criminals, who used the name "Extortion Gang," on Thursday posted that they had demanded \$9.7 million—\$1 for

the records of each of the 9.7 million current and former Medibank customers that were stolen.

Most concerning was the theft of health claims for almost 500,000 customers that include diagnoses and treatments. Medibank CEO David Koczkar condemned the release of Thursday's tranche of data as "disgraceful."

"The weaponization of people's private information in an effort to extort payment is malicious, and it is an attack on the most vulnerable members of our community," Koczkar said in a statement.

Cybersecurity Minister Clare O'Neil described the targeting of women who had terminated

pregnancies as "morally reprehensible."

"Yesterday, I indicated to the Parliament that the consequences of the Medibank hack were likely to get worse, and today those fears have been realized," O'Neil told Parliament.

"And I want to say, particularly to the women whose private health information has been compromised overnight, as the minister for cybersecurity but, more importantly, as a woman, this should not have happened," she added.

Medibank and government services were standing ready to support all customers in need even if a "large data dump occurs," O'Neil said.

The extortionists have warned that the dumps will continue daily.

Cybersecurity expert and Medibank customer Nigel Phair spoke of his frustration at not knowing how much of his personal data had been stolen.

"You just don't know what's been lost of your own details: Is it your name, your date of birth, is it your address, is it everything and more?" Phair told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

Medibank had failed to adequately address basic risk management questions on what data was stored, where it was stored, who had access and how that data was accessed, Phair said.

"If they'd done that competently beforehand, and put appropriate controls (in place), this wouldn't have happened," Phair said.

The extortionists have been

linked to high-profile Russian cybercrime gang REvil, short for Ransomware Evil and also known as Sodinokibi.

The Russian Federal Security Service said in January REvil "ceased to exist" after several arrests were made at the insistence of the United States.

Troy Hunt, founder of the "Have I been Pwned?" website, a service that enables users to check if their personal details have been exposed by data breaches, said it was unclear how REvil was involved.

An old REvil dark web site had started redirecting traffic to a new site that hosts the stolen Medibank data, Hunt said.

REvil could have rebranded as BlogXX, the name by which the Medibank hackers are becoming increasingly well known within cybersecurity circles, or former REvil operatives might have found a new home.

"The reality is, it's a bit like any job—people come and go," Hunt said.

Conversations between the hackers and Medibank that have been published with the data dumps show that the operation was initially intended to be a ransomware attack. That would have denied Medibank access to its own customer records and heightened pressure on finding a quick resolution.

But the hackers said they ran out of time to encrypt Medibank's systems with ransomware so fell back on the plan to monetize the data that had already been stolen.

Railroad Strike Postponed Until

By Josh Funk

AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. (AP)—The possibility of an economically devastating railroad strike has been pushed back into early December to allow time for engineers and conductors to vote on their agreements with the freight railroads and give more opportunity for the industry to renegotiate with two unions that rejected their deals last month.

Previously, a Nov. 19 strike deadline hung over the talks, but the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division union that represents track maintenance workers agreed Wednesday to delay any action at least until Dec. 4. So far now the trains operated by BNSF, Union Pacific, Norfolk Southern, CSX, Kansas City Southern and other railroads will continue delivering the raw materials and finished products that so many businesses in all industries need.

The railroads are offering the biggest raises workers have seen in more than four decades, but railroads have resisted union demands to add paid sick time, and the new contracts won't resolve all the workers' quality-of-life concerns.

All 12 rail unions must approve their deals to prevent a strike. Seven unions have ratified their five-year contracts with 24 percent raises and \$5,000 in bonuses so far, but

the BMWED and Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen unions rejected their agreements. They still want their sick leave. Three other unions are voting this month, and the two biggest unions that represent conductors and engineers aren't set to announce their results until two days after the previous Nov. 19 deadline.

"This agreement to extend the cooling off period affords all unionized employees the opportunity to vote on their agreements free of a looming strike threat," said Ian Jefferies, president and CEO of the Association of American Railroads trade group.

The outcome of the votes by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers unions will play a major role in determin-

ing how this contract dispute is resolved because those workers that operate the trains have the most quality-of-life concerns about demanding schedules that keep them on call 24/7.

And the renewed talks with the BMWED and BRS unions have stalled over the issue of paid sick time because the railroads don't want to offer much more than what a panel of arbitrators President Joe Biden appointed recommended this summer. And the industry argues that the unions have agreed to forego paid sick time over the years in favor of higher wages and strong short-term disability benefits.

The unions argue that the pandemic highlighted the need for the basic benefit of paid sick time that is taken for granted in most industries because the railroads temporarily offered some paid time off for COVID-related absences.

UNC To Get Infectious Disease Treatment Tag

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP)—University of North Carolina hospitals will soon be designated as a treatment center for patients with highly infectious diseases in the region.

Reports say that UNC and Emory University are the only two Regional Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Centers in the Southeast.

There are 13 treatment centers in the United States after the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services appointed three new centers, including UNC, last month.

The center will be run by Dr. William Fischer and Dr. David Wohl, who both study infectious diseases at the UNC School of Medicine.

Wohl said grants to establish these treatment centers came out of the realization that infectious diseases like COVID-19, ebola and monkeypox could pop up more frequently thanks to global climate change.

With a \$3 million grant from the federal government, the center will train and educate staff at UNC Hospitals, other hospitals, and clinics across the Southeast how to handle an infectious disease emergency.

Classifieds



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INSURANCE CUSTOMERS HELD HOSTAGE—Hackers had threatened to dump patient medical records on the dark web if the company didn't pay them millions.

Opinion

“Subpoenas” Served On U.S. Weapons Manufacturers

By Brad Wolf

Peace Action Network

What is it like to be so ashamed of the company for which you work that you cannot bring yourself to admit you work there? Ashamed of the products they manufacture, the innocent people those products kill, the hundreds of billions of dollars of public taxpayer money squandered in a gluttonous pursuit of profits?

This is life as seen on Nov. 10, at Raytheon Technologies in Arlington, Va. Members. Supporters of the Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal, a public tribunal, served “subpoenas” on Raytheon and three other United States weapons manufacturers charging them with War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, Theft, and Bribery.

The other three corporations served that same day were Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and General Atomics. These four corporations are representative of the modern-day piracy that is the U.S. war industry, a corporate capture of U.S. foreign policy, the Congress, the Departments of Defense and State, and the U.S. economic system.

Raytheon Technologies occupies a towering office building in Arlington, a stone’s throw from the Pentagon and Arlington National Cemetery, two sites commemorating death and the utter failure of war. Though the Raytheon building has its corporate logo plastered in blood-red letters at the top, once inside no sign exists evidencing this corporate war profiteer. No name, no logo, no receptionist—only security guards. A sad attempt to hide their dealings in the black art of war.

When asked, the guards refused to acknowledge Raytheon was in the building. Of the dozens of employees who passed, none would admit they worked at Raytheon, averting their eyes as they hurried away. When police arrived to escort the Tribunal members and supporters off premises, the police would not acknowledge Raytheon was headquartered there. Just like the employees, they had their orders. Keep quiet, admit nothing.

It was silent as a tomb except for the voices of the Tribunal members speaking the truth about the trail of suffering and death Raytheon and its corporate brethren have left across Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Somalia, and the Palestinian Occupied Territory. Meanwhile, these Merchants of Death have left the United States financially, morally, and spiritually bankrupt.

Raytheon Technologies has a market capitalization of \$96 billion. According to Macrotrends, Raytheon Technologies revenue for the quarter ending September 30 was \$16.951B, a 4.55 percent increase year-over-year. For 2021 it was \$64.388B, a 13.79 percent increase from 2020, for 2020 was \$56.587B, a 24.78 percent increase from 2019, and for 2019 was \$45.349B, a 30.68 percent increase from 2018. In four years, they have garnered almost a 70 percent increase in revenue. Marketing death is good for profits if you can live with yourself. Apparently, given their silence, many Raytheon employees struggle with this very issue.

Raytheon builds some of the most destabilizing, destructive, and expensive weapons on Earth. The Hypersonic Missile travels in excess of five times the speed of sound—Mach 5—covering vast distances in minutes. It is “hard to stop and flies nimbly to avoid detection and dodge defensive countermeasures.” All these are attributes which make the missile so destabilizing to a foreign leader who has only minutes to determine whether they are being attacked with a nuclear weapon.

Raytheon makes the Peregrine Air-to-Air Missile which they claim “increases firepower, penetrates bad weather, and goes the distance.” Add to that their plans to use “high power microwaves” in war and we see the epitome of a Merchant of Death.

Boeing, General Atomics, and Lockheed Martin are the same. They too revel in blood money as they build for war and drain the U.S. economy. In fact, some \$8 trillion in U.S. taxpayer money has been given to U.S. defense contractors over the past 20 years.

The U.S. War Industry plays a key role in fomenting war with their congressional lobbying, not just pushing for weapons contracts but influencing military strategy, thereby exacerbating and prolonging the anguish of civilians bearing the brunt of these wars of choice. On the issue of war in particular, Congress must be answerable to its citizens, not a handful of corporations.

With their silence on November 10, these weapons manufacturers revealed their shame. Their corporate mission statement stated accurately would be, “War Begets Profit.” For the Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal, the mission statement is “Come War Profiteers, Give Account.” Stand before a Tribunal and be judged.

And so, what is it like to give your talents to a corporation which hides its very existence, to give all your efforts and education and experience in the creation of weapons which kill indiscriminately? Their loss of words, their averting eyes, the damning silence offered in their corporate crypt, is the devastating answer.

Brad Wolf is a lawyer, former community college dean and Executive Director/Co-founder of Peace Action Network of Lancaster, Pa.



Tell the Supreme Court: We Still Need Affirmative Action

By Ben Jealous

People for the American Way

One of the great joys of my life is teaching. I’m fortunate to teach classes on social justice at the University of Pennsylvania, one of the most respected schools in the country. Penn has a longstanding commitment to affirmative action, and I have seen first-hand how diversity in the classroom benefits all my students. There’s just no question that diversity is a core piece of a vibrant academic community and a critical part of the learning experience—for all of us. Bringing together students with different lived experiences forces students to think critically about their assumptions, which is an essential goal of a university education.

That’s why I, like so many of us, am deeply concerned about two affirmative action cases argued at the Supreme Court just a few days ago. Opponents of affirmative action have been trying to destroy it for years. And now it looks like they just might get their chance.

Two universities, Harvard and the University of North Carolina (UNC), are defending their admissions programs against opponents who want them declared unconstitutional. (The university where I teach, Penn, and the organization I lead, People for the American Way, have both joined briefs supporting the universities’ positions.) Considering race as one of many factors in admissions has been upheld by the Supreme Court for decades. The Court has said repeat-

edly that diversity in higher education is a “compelling interest.”

But today’s Supreme Court is different. It’s dominated by far-right justices who have made it clear they don’t share this view. Chief Justice John Roberts’s famous quote, “The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race,” sums it up: conservatives believe affirmative action is at best unnecessary and at worst just another type of discrimination. Some conservatives would like to retire affirmative action because they claim it’s accomplished everything it set out to do. But it hasn’t. Not even close.

In Texas and Michigan, applications and enrollments of Black and Latino students plunged after state politicians banned the consideration of race in admission to their public universities. That’s a huge red flag. Nationally, there’s a big gap between the percentage of White and Black students who earn a bachelor’s degree. And that perpetuates all kinds of harm and inequities in income, health, family wealth, and more. We still have a long way to go in building a fair society in which all our children can thrive.

And here’s an important point that often gets lost. All students—no matter their race or color or creed—benefit from affirmative action. Having diverse classmates promotes a stimulating exchange of ideas and viewpoints. It prepares all students for living and working in our increasingly diverse society. The Supreme Court as a whole used to understand that. Today, I worry that only a minority of the justices do.

One of those justices is Ketanji Brown Jackson, the first Black woman on the Court and a person of profound insight and wisdom. Her questions in oral arguments got to the heart of the matter. Imagine two qualified students applying to UNC, Justice Jackson suggested: a White North Carolinian student whose family members had attended the school for generations, and a Black North Carolinian whose family had historically been shut out. The White applicant might make the case that attending UNC is deeply meaningful to her because it is a family tradition. The Black applicant might make the case that it is deeply meaningful because her family was so long denied.

Jackson’s question made it clear what would happen if the Court adopts the Far Right’s position: the White student’s appeal to family history would be allowed to help their chance of acceptance, while the Black student’s would not. It would further institutionalize discrimination and the harm it has caused generations of Black Americans.

I am so grateful for Justice Jackson’s voice on the Court. I also know that the six right-wing justices expressed skepticism of affirmative action at oral arguments. Many reporters are already writing its obituary. I hope for the sake of our education system and our next generation, that they will be wrong. The “compelling interest” that led the Court to uphold affirmative action in the past still exists—in fact, it may be stronger than ever.

Ben Jealous serves as president of People For the American Way and Professor of the Practice at the University of Pennsylvania. A New York Times best-selling author, his next book Never Forget Our People Were Always Free will be available in January 2023.



Who Does Protectionism Protect? Not You.

By Thomas L. Knapp

Director, The William Lloyd Garrison Center for Libertarian Advocacy Journalism

In August, Congress passed and president Joe Biden signed the CHIPS and Science Act, a \$280 billion corporate welfare bill for U.S. semiconductor manufacturers.

In October, the Biden administration added new restrictions on semiconductor exports to China, banning not just sales of semiconductors, but of the tools to make them—including by and to companies located in neither the U.S. nor China.

All of this activity is essentially an extension of Donald “Tariff Man” Trump’s trade war with China, waged for the purpose of “protecting” Big Business from foreign competition at the expense of American consumers.

That’s not how its promoters put it, of course. Advocates of “industrial policy” say they just want to bring manufacturing jobs back to the U.S., reduce American dependence on imports, and of course guard our “national security” from an ever-growing list of Enemies of the Week.

But the two ways of putting it amount to the same thing. Contrary to what you may have heard from advocates of “industrial policy,” the U.S. manufactures more stuff now than it ever has (apart from the same worldwide dip during the COVID-19 pandemic)—more than half again as much by value than it did 25 years ago.

Yes, there are fewer manufacturing JOBS... but that’s a good thing, not a bad thing.

The less labor required to manufacture a thing, the cheaper it is to make that thing and the more people can afford that thing. More efficient, less labor-intensive manufacturing leaves workers free to put their labor into areas where it offers a greater return—and with historically low unemployment levels, why shouldn’t they?

Instead of welding auto frames or making shoes, more Americans are providing healthcare, information technology services, and other things we need at least as much as cars and shoes.

As for dependence on imports, such dependence promotes peace and friendship between countries. People who need and value each other’s products and services don’t fight, they trade. The recent downturn in U.S.-China military relations is not mere coincidence.

That’s not to say protectionism doesn’t have beneficiaries. It certainly does.

Protectionism’s beneficiaries are politically connected business interests who want to charge you \$500 for a laptop computer and so ask the government to keep you from buying a competing Chinese model for \$350. And, of course, the politicians who give those business cronies what they want.

American consumers don’t benefit. We pay. Every “new American job” created by protectionist policies costs means that every American consumer—including the workers in those “new jobs”—pays more for the products or services involved.

Advocates of “industrial policy” want you to believe their ideas make you better off. Unless you’re a large stockholder in a “protected” corporation, they’re lying to you.

Thomas L. Knapp (Twitter: @thomaslknapp) is director and senior news analyst at the William Lloyd Garrison Center for Libertarian Advocacy Journalism (thegarrisoncenter.org). He lives and works in north central Florida.



Looking For Victory Beyond The Election

By Robert C. Koehler

PeaceVoice

After the election comes... the coverage, which always, at least in the mainstream media, seems to reduce everything to winning and losing, to strategy and tactics, rather than to the deep issues shaping the future.

The mainstream-created context of this year’s midterms amounted to: Will there be a “red tsunami”? That is, will the GOP, riding joyfully on the back of the bucking bronco of inflation, overwhelm Sleepy Joe’s Democratic Party and grab control over the House and Senate? Or will the Dems hold on, luck out, lose only minimally?

And the post-election news, of course, is the latter. The count continues as I write and not all election results, at national and state levels, are known yet, but what is known indicates that both parties more or less held their own and there definitely was no red tsunami. For the Democrats, this is the equivalent of a big victory.

The *New York Times*, for instance, noted: “Across the East Coast, in Virginia’s northern suburbs and mixed areas of Rhode Island and New Hampshire, embattled Democrats managed to hang on. They even knocked off a few Republicans here and there. In many tight races, abortion and Mr. Trump’s looming presence may have been the GOP’s undoing.”

Wow. Go, Democrats! Their milquetoast centrism kind of worked, with the help of the Supreme Court, which shocked the country by overturning *Roe v. Wade* and taking away American women’s 49 years of abortion rights. Perhaps “Mr. Trump’s” 2020 election denial, his MAGA base’s 2021 attempted coup and the looming threat of civil war also figured into the results. A fair number of American voters didn’t want that, apparently, and more of them than usual actually took the trouble to vote in this year’s midterms.

That, at any rate, is the context—corporate normalcy, you might say—in which the mainstream media is attempting to frame the 2022 elections. The Republicans get to go off the deep end and actually stand for something radical (proto-fascism), but the Democrats are just trying to keep America normal.

Fortunately, there is a progressive movement in this country, and this movement—this stand for sanity, this embrace of the future—was indeed present in the midterms, and had a significant impact. The Democratic Party, much to its own chagrin, is actually being forced to stand for something... beyond compromise.

“A number of newly elected progressives from across the country are poised to join the ‘Squad’ of left-wing champions in the U.S. House following Tuesday’s midterm elections,” Julia Conley writes at Common Dreams.

These include Summer Lee of Pennsylvania, Maxwell Frost of Florida, Delia Ramirez of Illinois, Greg Casar of Texas and Becca Balint of Vermont. Their issues include an increased minimum wage, labor rights and the right to unionize, gun sanity—and no doubt much, much more: issues that actually impact the global future. I’m sure they include the transcendence of racism and militarism, real voting rights and, of course, seriously facing, and dealing with, climate change and the maintenance of a habitable planet.

You think? To put it another way, these voting events aren’t just political game playing, winning vs. losing. And the issues don’t end when the election is over. There is a movement—a cry for profound change—on the left as well as on the right, though they have nothing in common with one another. The progressive movement is nonviolent and is not about claiming power for its own sake (or to gratify the ego of its Dear Leader).

Becca Balint put it this way, speaking Tuesday night on Democracy Now: “Whether we hold the House or lose the House, the work is the same. We still have a democracy to save.”

In contrast, as Ralph Nader pointed out, the mainstream Democrats barely ran on any issues at all. “The Democrats are ‘enchained’ by political-media consultants. If they lose the House and Senate, it’ll be because they lost it, not because the Republicans won it.”

Greg Casar, talking about Texas (which of course re-elected its far-right Republican governor, Greg Abbott), said: “We’re not a red state. We’re an underorganized state, a voter-suppressed state. It’s harder to vote in Texas than anywhere else in the country.”

Nonetheless, this is changing, progress is happening. Democratic victories aren’t about “out-centering” the Republicans (we’re against immigrants too, but in a nicer way). No! “It’s about standing up for our values.”

“You can win or lose elections,” Casar said, “but you don’t ever lose a movement. Our work is on a much greater horizon than one election.”

What if we lived in a country that saw beyond itself, beyond its current institutions? Well, we do, but just not in an officially acknowledged way. The country and the world are changing, a.k.a., evolving, in both terrifying and hope-creating ways, whether we like it or not. These changes are well beyond the control of contemporary politics—but not beyond humanity’s involvement.

This is the “greater horizon” to which we must open ourselves. Robert Koehler (koehlercw@gmail.com), syndicated by PeaceVoice, is a Chicago award-winning journalist and editor. He is the author of *Courage Grows Strong at the Wound*.

