

VERMONT'S 2024 ELECTION AND POLITICS IN 2025: CONTINUITIES, WITH CHANGES ON THE HORIZON?

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In many ways, the 2024 Vermont election results were broadly consistent with past partisan trends in the state, with Democratic candidates still dominant in both state and federal contest outcomes. But if one looks closely, there were important Republican gains in both voting percentages and specific state legislative races. While not changing partisan control of either the state House or Senate, these shifts indicate that portions of Vermont are skeptical of the current political consensus, and the legislative results will partially reshape the balance of power between the Democratic-controlled Legislature and Republican Governor Phil Scott. The 2025 legislative session has also revealed that Vermont's changing demographics continue to pose policy challenges, particularly in regards to education, health care, and housing.

The 2024 Vermont results in the Presidential race continue to reinforce the state's current status as deeply blue in Presidential elections. Vice President Kamala Harris received 63% of the vote, her highest vote percentage of any state (only the District of Columbia gave her a better outcome, at 90%). The towns won by Vice President Harris and President-Elect Trump in 2024 largely mirror the 2020 Vermont Presidential results (NY Times 2020), but with a few towns in the northern counties and around the Rutland area shifting to Trump in 2024. The overall turnout of voters (372,000) was also largely consistent with 2020 (367,000) (VT SOTS 2024). The active protests against Trump administration policies in 2025, including those surrounding Vice President Vance's family ski trip to the state, reflect the continuing Democratic partisan tilt of the state's electorate.

On the Congressional election level, there were also no surprises in 2024. Senator Bernie Sanders handily won reelection with 61% of the vote, with Republican Gerald Malloy's greatest voting strength coming in many of the same towns carried by President-Elect Trump. Representative Becca Balint also handily won her first race for reelection to Vermont's sole U.S. House seat, with 58.5% of the vote (and again largely mirroring the towns won by Harris and Sanders). Notably, this was about a 2% decline from her 2022 results (60.5%), showing a small uptick in support for the Republican challenger (VT SOTS 2024). So there was no sea change in the Vermont Congressional political dynamic.

On the statewide office level, the 2024 results were also generally unsurprising. Governor Phil Scott, who has consistently distanced himself from President Trump and the national Republican Party, won a convincing 71.4% of the vote (mirroring his 2022 results) in his fourth reelection campaign, winning a plurality in every one of Vermont's 247 cities and towns. By being an independent Republican in the Vermont tradition, he has built up a broad bipartisan support base since his first election in 2016, winning many Democratic voters who also voted for Harris, Sanders, and Balint. Notably, the Republican candidate for Lieutenant Governor, John Rodgers, won a narrow victory (46%) over the incumbent Democratic candidate, David Zuckerman (44.5%); the overall results included 3.6% going to the Peace and Justice candidate, and 5.5% cast as blank ballots for the contest, so the long term partisan implications of the result

are debatable. The incumbent Democratic candidates for Attorney General, Auditor of Accounts, Secretary of State, and Treasurer all won reelection, although each won by narrower margins than in 2022, reflecting a small but important “Trump bump” in 2024 for Republican challengers (VT SOTS 2024). So on the statewide level, election results were also predictable, with the exception of the Lieutenant Governor’s race.

It is on the level of state legislative races where the results became interesting. In the Vermont State Senate, Republicans picked up 6 seats, nearly doubling their representation in the Senate (from 7 to 13) and eliminating the supermajority that Democrats had held in the body (Weinstein 2024). This political gain was mirrored in the State House results, where Republicans picked up 18 seats (going from 37 to 55 seats); this result was also enough to break the Democratic supermajority in the House (Goswami 2024). The implications of these Republican shifts are noteworthy on two levels. Some of the Republican turnovers came in towns that voted Democratic for most statewide and national offices, and the loss of the supermajorities means that Democrats can no longer predictably override vetoes by Governor Scott. This gives important negotiating leverage to the Governor in policymaking.

The Presidential election results have already had ongoing consequences in Vermont in 2025. For example, the actions of the Trump administration are impacting many of the northern Vermont towns who supported President Trump’s candidacy, in ways that they were not necessarily expecting. With all of the tensions created by President Trump’s immigration crackdown, the Haskell Library in Derby Line, which lies partially in Canada, has been forced to limit its access for Canadians, dividing a space which had been a international community meeting point across the border (Russell 2025). The arrests of some immigrant farmworkers have also divided many of the northern Vermont towns that supported Trump in 2024, with some in support of the toughened border enforcement and others concerned with its human and local economic impacts (Bredderman 2025). It remains to be seen whether these effects will have repercussions in these communities for how they vote in 2026 and beyond.

Beyond the recent elections, Vermont continues to struggle with a number of long-term policy challenges, many of them driven by the aging demographic of Vermont’s population. Many of the state’s businesses have struggled in recent years to find sufficient employees as the working age population shrinks, leading a recent state Labor commissioner to assert that “there just aren’t enough Vermonters to meet the needs of our state and our employers in the future” (Casselman 2023). Part of this labor dynamic is due to the shortage of housing in Vermont to meet the demands of those looking to move to Vermont to work; a 2024 contended that Vermont will need 24,000 new homes to be constructed in the next five years to make sufficient affordable housing available in the state (Berlin 2024).

Vermont’s intertwined aging population and challenged tax revenues have also put pressure on Vermont’s K-12 education system, leading Governor Scott to appoint a school redistricting task force, charged with developing a plan for consolidating the state’s schools into five large districts to address the rising costs of the current system (a hugely controversial issue for many small towns) (Weinstein 2025). After extensive debate and public contention, a majority of the task force declined to endorse the consolidation map, instead proposing incentives for voluntary mergers among the 119 existing school districts. This has raised the ire

of Governor Scott, who declared that the task force had failed in its task (McDonald 2025). The battle over financing and reorganizing Vermont's K-12 schools will thus continue into 2026.

Vermont, like many other states, is also facing increasing pressure on its health care system. The 2025 session of the Legislature passed two bills to attempt controlling rising health care costs in the state, limiting the amount that Vermont health care providers can charge for outpatient prescription drugs, and requiring state health care officials to “develop a statewide healthcare delivery plan” by 2028. As one account of the issue noted, “The passage of the bills comes at a time when many health care entities in the state are struggling to stay afloat while patients and employers are facing skyrocketing insurance premiums”. (Sabet 2025)

In sum, the evolving demographic, economic and societal pressures that Vermonters are increasingly facing in 2025 (highlighted by the representative issues discussed above) may be placing Vermont's politics on the verge of a potential inflection point in the near future. While many of the 2024 electoral outcomes appear to reinforce recent partisan patterns, the rising costs of living for Vermonters may lead them to make greater demands on state leaders and seek political alternatives if the system is unable to meet the moment. 2026 might be a very telling election year.

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