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COMIC BY COLBI LORANGER, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Daily OPINION

PATRICK'S POLITICS:
ENJOY THIS MOMENT OF HOPE



FILE LOGO/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Michigan U.S. Senator-elect Abdul El-Sayed speaks at a church service. With 98% of votes reported, El-Sayed leads with 52.50%.

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by Patrick Minnerly
OPINION EDITOR
HE/HIM/HIS
patrick.minnerly@uconn.edu

There is good news in the United States today. After two years of one-party Republican rule, the people fought back. Across the country, from reliably blue states to battlegrounds to places where Democrats hadn't sniffed victory in almost a century, the people voted in droves to rebuke the Trump administration and the Republican Party.

The midterms were such a shocking win for Democrats that a newly-blue Texas — a state where Democrats tried and failed for almost four decades — wasn't even the most surprising development. South Carolina elected a Democratic senator. Kansas, a state where Democrats last won statewide office in 1932, did, too. As I'm writing this, Mississippi might elect a Democrat and its first Black senator since the 1880s, during the time of Reconstruction. The results were damning enough for Republicans that Trump said he would accept the results and work with Democrats. Do you remember the last time Trump said something so conciliatory? It's been a long wait.

It's been a long wait for many aspirations. For the Democrats to bounce back. For Texas and other Republican-dominated states to turn blue. For sensible candidates to triumph over the crazed, chaotic and cruel MAGA movement. But these have been achieved now, and I feel joy about politics for the first time in a long while.

I am rejoicing in the fact Trump's raging unpopularity finally caught up to him. The idea of MAGA, which once captivated the Republican base and brought voters to Trump's side, has ended in disaster. Republicans that ran on their connections to Trump, such as Ken Paxton, lost handily. Those who tried to distance themselves lost too, because it was far too late. They couldn't run from accountability forever.

I am enjoying the notion that at long last we might be able to reverse the consequences that MAGA wrought. The power of the presidency will no longer go unchecked; Trump will now be forced to work with Democrats to pass anything meaningful. More importantly, the influence that Trump once wielded is greatly diminished. After years as the unquestioned leader of the Republican Party — to the point that it was essentially his party — he is now a lame duck president. Republicans will have to find a successor to MAGA, yet the MAGA movement is the Trump movement. Without him, the bonds that hold it together will likely break apart. It turns out that a political brand based around a cult of personality sours when that personality becomes unpalatable.

I am happy that the election process went smoothly. Fears that Trump would refuse to accept the results were ultimately proved wrong; part of this equation was just how massive the Democratic wins turned out to be. Trump and other Republicans had no choice but to accept the crushing defiance of the people. They were forced to accept the work of democracy.

Most of all, however, I wish to celebrate the joy itself. There is a joy erupting from people, especially those in states the Democrats flipped, who previously didn't think they had a voice or a choice. It is a joy verging on disbelief, measured in the noise of excited screams from election night parties and breathless messages from my friends. It is a joy long bottled up by the oppressive policies of the Trump administration, which sought to spread a culture of fear around immigrants and minorities. How wonderfully sweet it is, then, that America rebuked this hate with a series of historic firsts for elected minorities; Georgia chose a Black woman, Keisha Lance Bottoms, for governor. Texas' Gina Hinojosa will now be the state's first Hispanic governor. In Michigan, Abdul El-Sayed became the first Muslim senator. There are many more history-making victories to celebrate, too many to list.

I say enjoy this moment because it is precisely that: a moment in time. There will be harder days ahead, when the dust settles and the Democratic Party returns to its usual squabbling. One midterm election result does not mean America is free from hate, bigotry and bad governance; Trump will be around for two more years. There is still a (likely very bitter) presidential election to come. But the results this Nov. 3 are certainly good news.

This joy I and many others feel is born out of hope, a hope that America can move past the dark chapter it has been suffering through. A hope that never went away, but merely slept as this election approached. That hope has now been rekindled and renewed.

Nearly two years ago, I wrote that America chose hate when it elected Trump, but that the fight was not over. As the results came in last night, I found myself thinking about how much has changed. It has been difficult to write this column for quite a while, but I have never felt happier about getting to write than in this moment. The people of America have proven that 2024 was indeed far from the end.

I am reminded of my favorite quote from Lord of the Rings, which I fervently hope will continue to apply as the country reckons with this blue wave. Samwise Gamgee, in a desperate hour, reassures Frodo: "How could the world go back to the way that it was when so much bad had happened? But in the end, it's only a passing thing, this shadow. Even darkness must pass. A new day will come. And when the sun shines it will shine out the clearer." Sam understood that, in the face of great trial, hope is a powerful and joyous thing. We the people have gone through a great trial, and as we emerge on the other side, there is hope again for a better country.