Opinion

The failures of 2024 sparked the Blue-nami of 2026

By JOANNA FARRELL
Opinion Editor

The historic 2026 midterms ended on election night with a result even Democrats didn't predict. Areas of the nation that were largely considered "Trump Country" swung left and generated a huge lead for Democrats in the House of Representatives and the Senate. At the end of the night, Democrats were projected to take control of both chambers of Congress with astounding numbers.

In the race for the Senate, Democrats had to retain control of all the seats they held, but they also needed to flip four seats in key battleground states that would prove to be tough competition. They did it.

Currently, Democrats hold 54 seats in the Senate, but we are still waiting for results of a key race in Mississippi that has been tight since the polls closed.

All night in Mississippi, we watched the Republican candidate take the lead, then 20 minutes later the Democratic candidate was leading, with incumbent Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith – R and Scott Colom – D being separated by a difference of 43 votes in the morning following the election with 95% of votes counted. This is going to be a tight race until the very last ballot is counted.

Another tight race of the night was Maine. At different points throughout the race, the two candidates were separated by only a few hundred votes, and, like Mississippi, the candidates took turns in the lead throughout the night. The race eventually came to a head in the early morning hours when polling experts ultimately called the race for Democratic candidate Troy Jackson.

Throughout the night, Democrats and Republicans waited on bated breath for results from the Senate race in key battleground states like North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio, Florida and Texas, among others. And, for Democrats, we wouldn't have to wait long to watch a historic blue wave sweep across the map on election night.

North Carolina was the first of the battleground states to call their Senate race. Before the election, Democratic candidate Roy Cooper was polling 13 percentage points ahead of Republican candidate Michael Whatley. While North Carolina turning blue wasn't exactly a shock to those of us following the numbers, the state's race set the tone for the rest of the night.

Unfortunately, the North Carolina race was followed quickly by Democratic disappointment in Florida. Florida was called shortly after the win in North Carolina, and while many Democrats were hopeful that Florida would elect Democratic candidate Angie Nixon, in the days leading up to the election, incumbent Republican Senator Ashley Moody remained six points ahead in the polls. This led to a devastating election night loss for Florida Senate hopeful Nixon.



After the loss, Nixon gave a powerful and teary-eyed concession speech that reminisced on her campaign, the trials and tribulations she and her team endured and the message of hope that was sent to voters, regardless of the loss.

"We knocked on doors that were never ever knocked before…We made phone calls to voters that thought no one was listening to them," Nixon said. "Folks who never believed that politics had anything to offer them, and because of the work that you all did, we gave them something to believe in again…"

As the night progressed, Democrats watched as, state by state, the blue "Senate control" bar inched further ahead, taking states like South Carolina, Ohio and Iowa, which all turned red in the 2024 elections when Republicans seized the presidency, and a majority in the House and Senate all in one night.

Of all the surprises during the election, Texas dropped jaws.



ILLUSTRATION BY LILIANA MIRABELLA

The day before the election, polls showed that Democratic Senate hopeful James Talarico was polling just two points ahead of Republican competitor Ken Paxton. In terms of polls, two points is not a lot, and still meant the state was generally up for grabs.

The pre-election polling results are not what we saw on election night. As Texas turned a shocking shade of blue for Talarico, it wasn't by a measly two or three points.

Texas Senator James Talarico won the state by a whopping 12 percentage points and took Texas with 55.1% of the vote compared to Republican candidate Ken Paxton's 43%, despite Paxton receiving $158 million in campaign funding from tech giant Elon Musk.

Talarico will be the first democratic senator in Texas in over 30 years.

One of the most historic elections of the night was Kansas. And Toto? I don't think we're in "Trump Country" anymore. The same tornado that swept Dorothy out of Kansas swept Republicans out of power.

In a tough battle for the Senate seat, Democratic candidate Adam Hamilton pulled ahead of incumbent Republican Senator Roger Marshall by nearly five percentage points.

Hamilton's historic win will make him Kansas' first Democratic senator in 94 years. The last democrat that Kansas sent to the U.S. Senate was Senator George McGill in 1932, making this win nothing short of astonishing.

Winning the House of Representatives would prove to be a much easier battle for Democrats as they only needed to flip three seats along with retained control of seats they already possessed. The house would be won in a total landslide with Democrats flipping 32 seats across the nation giving them a 40 seat lead and 258 seats in total against their Republican counterparts who currently hold just 177 seats.

On top of all of that, election night witnessed many historic firsts: The first Black female governor, the first Muslim in the U.S. Senate, California's first elected Latina governor, the first female Native American governor, Florida's first Black governor, the first openly gay man elected to the U.S. Senate, the first native American woman elected to the Senate, the first Black governor of Wisconsin and the first female governor of Ohio.

All these small victories represent the public's opinion on the Trump Administration. President Donald Trump urged people to vote as if he was on the ballot, and Americans certainly did.

They voted like the price of gas is high; they voted like the economy is in shambles; they voted like we are funding genocide; they voted like we are at war with Iran. In every case, Americans voted like Trump was on the ballot, and in every case, he lost.

You don't need to go far for college

By ADRIANA CERBONE
Copy Editor

Fall of my senior year of high school was one of the most stressful few months of my life. Between managing school, applying to colleges and dealing with outsiders' opinions, I felt drained.

I had no idea what I wanted to study in school or where I wanted to go. But as application deadlines crept closer and closer, I realized all I cared about was staying close to my family.

For some reason, I felt so much pressure to go to college hundreds of miles away. I applied to 12 schools, and only two were in my state: Quinnipiac University and the University of Connecticut. The others were a plane ride away, such as Clemson University or the University of South Carolina.

I thought it would be so cool to go to school in the South where it's warm year-round. It took me a while, but now I've realized there's nothing better than being close to home. I'm close to my job, family, boyfriend, dog and friends.

When I decided to stay close, people told me, "Jobs want to see that you could leave home." First of all, ouch, that's harsh. Second, I don't care. I can see how studying abroad could look extremely good when you're applying to jobs; I mean, it's impressive if you can move out of the country for four months, but just for college? I don't think it's necessary.

Also, the majority of people are only 18 when they move into college. After 18 years of living at home, not everyone is ready to have everything figured out. We should not all be expected to graduate high school and move away for the next four years. But if you were ready, that's amazing.

Everyone is different, and staying close is what worked for me and my life.

If you're someone who decided to go far for school, good for you; I mean it. But for me, I felt no need. I know there are a lot of factors that go into moving away for school, like your family dynamic, finances, where you want to live in the future and so much more.

I want to stay in Connecticut after I graduate. I've lived there my whole life, and I want to stay, find a job and build a future here. My internship, job opportunities and connections will be here too. When I graduate, I won't have to start my network from scratch, so why would I go far? I still feel independent, successful and involved at college.

I live on campus, I'm taking seven classes and I'm on e-board for three clubs. I've built a life here at Quinnipiac, and I've met some of my closest friends. And best of all, I have an easy drive home whenever I want to work or I'm homesick. I'm still 50 minutes away, though; it's not like I went to school in my backyard.

There are actually a lot of benefits to staying close: having the choice to commute, being closer to family, more internships and job opportunities, being in an environment that you know and even saving money.

What doesn't sound great about that?

However, there are also benefits of moving far away, such as gaining independence and resiliency, finding new friends and community, strengthening faith and enjoying new experiences.

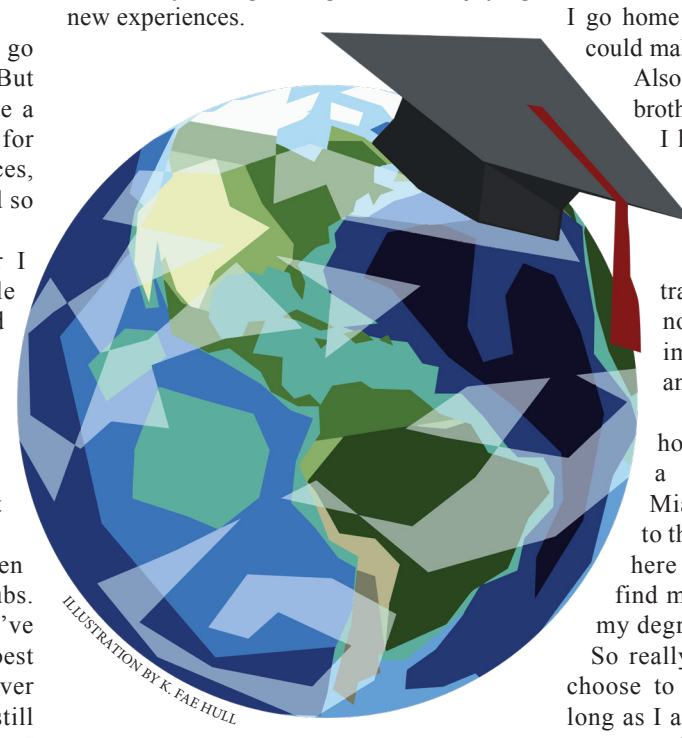

ILLUSTRATION BY K. FAE HULL

I can see both sides; I just want people to respect both sides.

One in four students transfer or drop out of college after their first year because of how difficult the transition can be. Everyone is different, but for me the transition wasn't horrible, even with my crazy freshman year roommates. It's all because I knew my support system wasn't far.

Through all the chaos and stress, my mind was at peace knowing I could be home in under an hour if I wanted to. Not meaning I go home all the time, but just knowing I could makes a difference.

Also, going to the same school as my brother is comforting, knowing that I have family so close by, although I don't see him often due to our busy schedules.

Many people from my high school who went far eventually transferred to closer schools. I'm not entirely sure why, but I can imagine it was the homesickness and the difficult transition.

Sometimes I still think about how cool it would be to go to a school like the University of Miami, but I'm not in college to go to the beach every day and party. I'm here to learn, build my connections, find myself and, most importantly, get my degree.

So really, why does it matter where we choose to go to college? In my eyes, as long as I am applying myself and focusing on my studies, I don't see an issue.

At the end of the day, everyone is different, and you should go to the college that makes the most sense for you. The school that was right for me happens to be under 50 miles from my house, and people need to understand that's okay; you don't need to go far.