

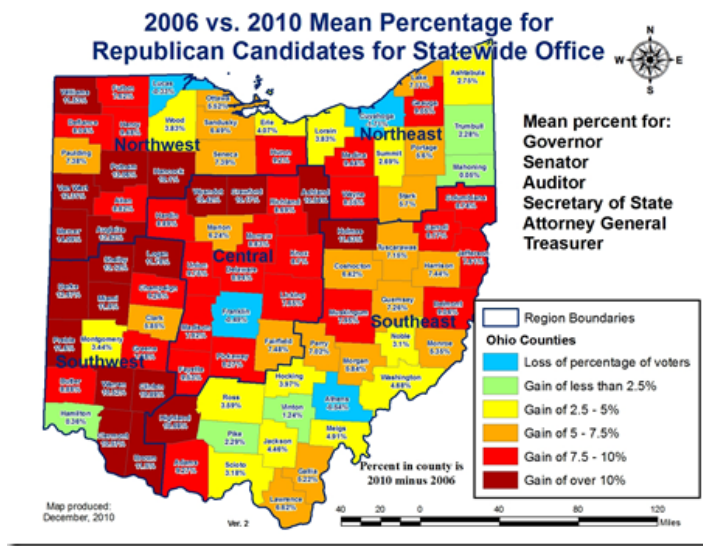


The University of Akron Bliss Institute does a post-mortem on 2010 turnout

by MODERNESQUIRE on JANUARY 3, 2011 · VIEW COMMENTS

The University of Akron's Bliss Institute drafted a report titled "[Mapping the Republican Sweep: The 2010 Election Results in Ohio.](#)" The report, yet again, puts to rest any notion that Cuyahoga County cost Governor Strickland the election.

Take a look at these maps:



This first map shows where the Republican candidates made gains compared to the Republican slate in 2006. Lucas, Athens, Cuyahoga, and Franklin Counties are the only counties where the Republicans saw their mean percentage of votes drop from 2006 to 2010. They saw huge increases in western Ohio (including in Montgomery County), coupled with strong increases elsewhere in central Ohio and in Columbiana, Jefferson, and Belmont counties.

Now, Republican performance had little place to go but up statewide from their numbers in 2006. But the geographical distribution is telling when you look at the map that compares the 2006 turnout from the 2010.

That map looks like this:

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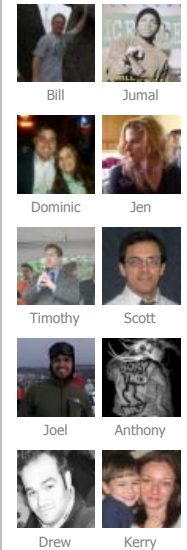
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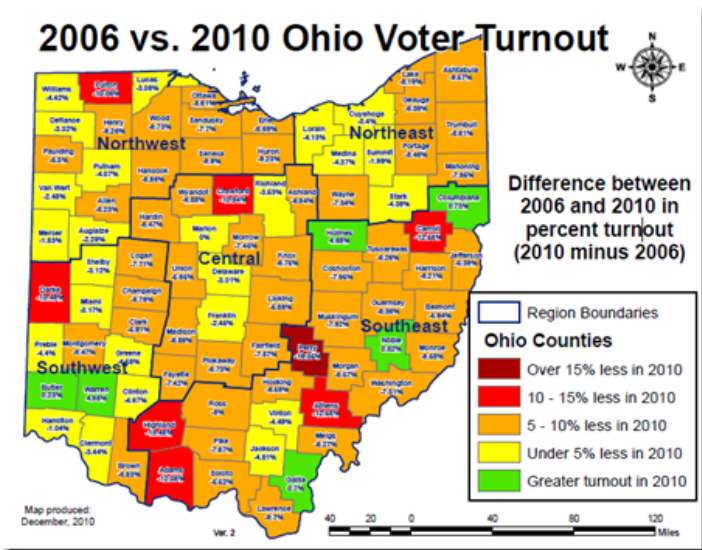
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Cuyahoga County only saw a .4% drop in turnout. Only six counties had better turnout than they did in 2006. Of the 82 counties that saw a dropoff in turnout compared to 2006, Cuyahoga County had the second *smallest* drop off in turnout.

Cuyahoga County has an infant county party structure that is emerging like a phoenix from the ashes of the corrupt Democratic county party structure that is still dominating headlines up there. It had *no* serious contested Congressional races on the national parties' radar once Tom Ganley imploded over allegations of sexual improprieties. Despite the lack of an established county party GOTV infrastructure and little but a contested in name only county executive race, Cuyahoga County did just fine, especially when compared to other Democratic counties.

Franklin County saw a drop in turnout *six times* larger than Cuyahoga County and had one of the most hotly contested congressional races in the nation. Montgomery County saw a staggering drop off in turnout that is over **twenty-three times** larger than what we saw in Cuyahoga County. As a result, Ted Strickland barely won Montgomery County.

Turnout was so bad in Montgomery County that incumbent African-American state Senator Fred Strahorn *lost* a district that was largely viewed as a dependable African-American Democratic seat to a white neophyte who concentrated all of his campaigning in the white, but less populous part of the district in Miami and Darke County and won as a result by less than 2,000 votes.

Even if Cuyahoga County would have been the same as in 2006, Strickland still wouldn't have been re-elected. The reality is that Cuyahoga County departed from the norm in dropping turnout this year as much as could be expected. If you look to southeastern Ohio, we saw (with some exceptions), significant drop in turnout. Montgomery, Franklin, and Hamilton Counties all saw larger drops in turnout than Cuyahoga County, too. I'm more convinced that these regions are closer to why we lost than Cuyahoga County, which, in my opinion, was tapped as much as could be possible given the political environment even if it had had a robust and well-established GOTV county party infrastructure.

You compare the two maps, and you start to see how the entire election was dictated by turnout. Republicans were able to concentrate their performance

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in the western counties of Ohio and kept that region for seeing a drop in turnout. In fact, in some of the most populous Republican counties in that region, they were actually able to see an increase in turnout from 2006. If Democrats won in 2006 in a massive voter revolt, Republicans won in 2010 due to massive voter apathy. There is no mandate to be read into an election with turnout numbers like this. But it does show that the Republicans were not employing an 88-county strategy in 2010 at all.

On the other hand, Democrats saw substantial drop in support in central and southeastern Ohio. While enormous effort and attention went into Cuyahoga County with some success, that left other areas neglected. The result is that a more concentrated, higher turnout in the west for the Republicans was able to barely overcome a diluted and weaker turnout for the Democrats in the southeast and northeast.

Athens County saw a turnout of 35%. **THIRTY-FIVE PERCENT!** That was the worst in the State in 2010 which saw [less than half of all eligible voters voted.](#)

I still say the obsession with Cuyahoga County's turnout is a red herring if the Democratic Party is serious about addressing the problems that led to its loss. This report would again confirm [what I've said after the election](#) (and that was when the unofficial results made Cuyahoga County's turnout look *worse*): the *real* problem in turnout in 2010 was Montgomery County and Hamilton County and the SEO region. Cuyahoga County was not the problem. It just wasn't the solution for a large drop in support in the central Ohio and SEO region coupled with a drop off the cliff in turnout in Montgomery County.

But I'm still left wondering. Why is Montgomery County continuing to underperform. The party lost the mayor's office in Dayton. It seemed absolutely AWOL this November. What's going on there?

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