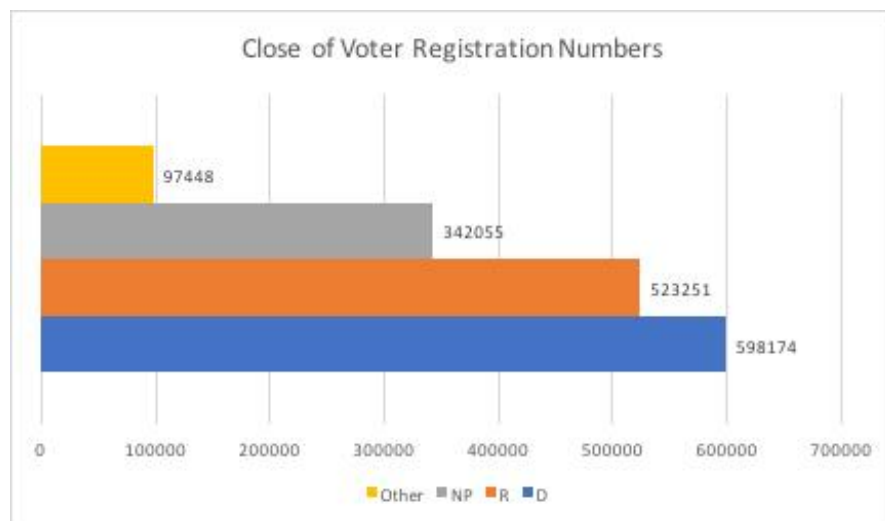




2018 Nevada General Election Report

When the book is closed on the 2018 election cycle, historians will likely look at several key trends that developed early on. Those trends led to dramatic sweeps by the Democrats in Nevada yesterday. From the top to the bottom of the ticket, Democrats in Clark County overwhelmed the rest of the state and ushered Steve Sisolak, Kate Marshall and Aaron Ford into office.

As Carrara Nevada clients are acutely aware, voter registration numbers matter as they are an important factor in determining outcomes. This year, the Democrats had a sizable, but by no means insurmountable, lead in registered voters statewide at the time of the registration deadline.



Midterm Elections Draw Lower Turnout

Astute observers of past elections know that turnout in midterm elections - the election in between Presidential elections - has historically elicited lower voter turnout. Such was the case in 2014, the last midterm in Nevada, when a historic low turnout created Republican majorities in both the Senate and the Assembly, and elected the likes of Adam Laxalt, Ron Knecht and Dan Schwartz into office. The question going into early voting in this midterm election cycle was whether or not Democrats would turn out, and how motivated they were to turn Nevada blue. We had our answer fairly early.

Early Voting Trends

Like many other states, Nevada conducts early voting for a period of two weeks leading up to election day. This cycle, early voting began on October 20 and ran through November 2.

It was always understood in political corridors that Democrats would outpace Republicans in Clark County by substantial numbers. In the rural parts of the state, Republicans historically outpace Democrats, but not nearly in large enough numbers to offset Clark County. Consequently, statewide races have typically pivoted on turnout in Washoe County. The 2018 cycle was no different. In

Washoe, like the majority of early voting trended towards the Democrats, a surprising development given that Republican candidates have relied on Washoe to turn out more GOP votes in order to offset Democratic firewalls created in Southern Nevada.

Democrats dominated early voting in the two largest counties for the majority of early voting. Ultimately, the turnout that they created in Clark County and, surprisingly, in Washoe County proved indefensible.

Statewide	Clark			Washoe			Rurals		
628,674	424,204			121,552			82,918		
	D	R	Other	D	R	Other	D	R	Other
	45.1%	33.9%	21.0%	40.5%	39.1%	20.4%	24.2%	56.6%	19.2%

Source: The Nevada Independent

Moreover, like several other key battleground states, early voting participation in Nevada was off the charts. On the last day of early voting in the state, lines were upwards of two hours long, and some polling locations stayed open well past their 8 pm deadlines to accommodate those who wanted to vote, and that trend continued into election day with people standing in lines for hours. It had the feel of a Presidential election. In the end, the early voting numbers portended an ominous sign for the GOP in the state. Early signs pointed to a difficult night for Republicans up and down the ticket.

U.S. Senate Race

In a hotly contested statewide race with national implication, Congresswoman Jacky Rosen won a challenge to Senator Dean Heller. The Democratic turnout model in both Washoe County and Clark County washed away any rural advantage that Heller tried to build. It was clear by the end of early voting that Rosen was going to win this race. Heller's campaign team could not keep up and his hope that the Independents would break strongly in his direction just didn't pan out. It was also clear that Heller's back and forth dance with the President cost him crucial votes. Rosen's team ran a very effective ad calling Heller "Senator Spineless" and that label stuck in voters' minds. Moreover, it is clear that the President's upside down numbers also worked against Heller in the critical parts of the state - Clark and Washoe Counties.

Heller	438,516
Rosen	486,794

CD3

Left open by the departure of Jacky Rosen, five-time loser Danny Tarkanian took on newcomer Susie Lee. Much like his five previous races, Tarkanian excelled in the Primary election, but could not attract enough Independents and moderate GOP voters to win in a general election. Lee ran a textbook campaign, defining Tarkanian early and then keeping the pressure on him throughout the race. While public polling in this race was limited, it felt like Lee was ahead the entire time.

This is the third time in the last sixteen years that the Democrats have held this seat. It is one that will continue to be a swing seat in 2020, and it largely swings based on the national mood. It is not insignificant that in the last two elections, Democratic women have won the seat, albeit against a flawed candidate in Tarkanian.

Tarkanian	121,505
Lee	147,048

CD4

After a Capitol Hill scandal ran incumbent Ruben Kihuen out of the race, Steven Horsford easily won back the seat he lost in 2014. Horsford cruised to an 8% victory over former Congressman Crescent Hardy.

Hardy	101,748
Horsford	120,888

Governor's Race

Four years ago, Adam Laxalt broke every rule in Nevada when it came to a statewide run for office. No statewide officeholder had ever lost both Clark and Washoe Counties and still gone on to win the office. But this time, Laxalt's luck ran out and he was crushed in his run for Governor, again losing both Washoe and Clark Counties.

Steve Sisolak was battle-tested coming into the general election, having fought off a primary challenge from Chris Giuchigliani. Moving into the general election, Sisolak had depleted the majority of his campaign coffers and had to reload quickly. Over the summer and into the early fall, Sisolak remained competitive despite an aggressive effort by the Laxalt campaign to define Sisolak before he could define Laxalt. By the time Labor Day had passed, Sisolak was within striking distance, and by the middle of October the race appeared to take shape in favor of Sisolak. By the time early voting had opened, all indications appeared to show that the race was his to lose. As the returns rolled in, that proved to be the case. Sisolak crushed Laxalt in Clark County by 14% and remarkably held his own in Washoe County, beating back Laxalt by 2.5%.

Laxalt	437,690
Sisolak	476,973

Lieutenant Governor's Race

Michael Roberson, who two years earlier had failed in his efforts to run for Congress, now had his eyes on this race. Kate Marshall was the favorite from the outset. A moderate Democrat from Washoe County, she created an early advantage in the race and never looked back. Marshall won easily over Roberson.

Roberson	419,155
Marshall	483,244

Secretary of State's Race

Current Secretary of State Barbara Cegavske faced off against Assemblyman Nelson Araujo. This was perhaps the most under the radar race in the state. Araujo showed an ability to raise funds fairly easily, and for the entire evening it appeared that he would win. However, Cegavske, at the time of this report, appears to be the lone GOP to win statewide office by charging back and then holding off a late push from Araujo. A recount is expected to be called for by Araujo.

Cegavske	465,096
Araujo	458,632

Attorney General Race

Next to the U.S. Senate race and the Governor's race, the battle to become the next AG for Nevada was the most watched and anticipated race in the state. Senate Majority Leader Aaron Ford was facing off against former Assemblyman Wes Duncan. As results came in, the two jockeyed back and forth. As rural results came in, Duncan charged ahead, then as Clark County results came in, Ford pulled ahead. In the end, Ford appears to have squeaked out a victory over Duncan by the narrowest of margins.

Duncan	449,030
Ford	453,290

State Senate

Headed into the 2018 election cycle, the Democrats held a one seat edge, 11-9-1. The nonpartisan in the Senate, Senator Patty Farley, caucused with the Democrats, creating more of a 12-9 setting. Three seats, all held by Republicans, were considered toss up races this election cycle, and when the dust settled the body ended up with **13 democratic seats**, 1 seat short of a supermajority.

The three critical races, all vacated by the incumbents, became the focus of the early voting turnout phenomenon in Clark County. From the outset, Carrara Nevada felt that at least one of these seats were going to provide a challenge for Republicans. We felt that the other two seats had the possibility of remaining in GOP control, but early voting numbers indicated that the ground might be shifting in what had previously been solid GOP districts during the midterm elections. This possibility was confirmed as the GOP lost two seats that it had previously held; SD8 and SD9.

SD8 (Valerie Weber - R vs. Marilyn Dondero Loop - D)

Historically, this seat has trended Republican. Yet, this year's early voting totals and voter registration numbers appeared to provide Dondero-Loop with a slight advantage. That voter registration advantage paid off as Dondero-Loop slipped past Weber.

Weber	23,490
Dondero-Loop	25,510

SD9 (Tiffany Jones - R vs. Melanie Scheible - D)

This race was over after the first couple of days of early voting efforts. Lost in much of the conversation about this particular Senate seat was the fact that the seat itself was nested inside several hotly contested races - this Senate race, a key Assembly race, and a high-profile County Commission race involving a superb GOP candidate running against a former Harry Reid protégé and former State Senator. Thus, it should come as no surprise that the Democrats focused a lot of energy and resources into all three of these races. In the end, that focus paid off in a decisive victory for Scheible, along with the other two Democrats.

Jones	24,465
Scheible	30,652

SD20 (Keith Pickard - R vs. Julie Pazina - D)

Similar to SD8, on paper this race, following the close of early voting, appeared to favor Patina. Packard felt confident, though, as much of the coordinated campaign efforts of Democrats really focused on this area, which was at the crossroads of the U.S. Senate race, the CD3 race, the hotly contested AD29 election, and this race. When all the ballots were counted, Pickard eked out the narrowest of wins over a business-friendly Democrat in Pazina.

Pickard	26,949
Pazina	26,892
Bronstein	1,071

Other key races in the Senate are below.

Elected to the Senate or Re-elected to the Senate

- SD2 - Mo Denis - D
- SD10 - Yvanna Cancela - D
- SD12 - Joe Hardy - R
- SD13 - Julia Ratti - D
- SD14 - Ira Hansen - R
- SD16 - Ben Kieckhefer - R
- SD17 - James Settlemeyer - R
- SD21 - James Ohrenschall - D

State Assembly

The only question as the gavel fell on the 2017 legislative session was not whether the Democrats would remain in control of the gavel, rather it was how large their majority would be in the 2019 session. Already enjoying a 27-15 advantage, the Democrats were one seat away from achieving a supermajority status, and for much of the summer it appeared that they might achieve such heights. Too many GOP seats were Democratic hot spots, creating vulnerable incumbents in a host of areas, primarily in Clark County. When all the votes were tallied, Democrats secured a super majority, holding all of their seats and beating back GOP incumbents in two Southern Nevada seats, AD4 and AD37 and running their majority to 29 seats.

Some key races are highlighted below.

AD2 (John Hambrick - R vs. Jeannie Sherwood - D)

Hambrick's real challenge was in the Primary where he beat back a challenge from Jim Small. Sherwood, a novice, was positioning herself for a run in two years. With the backing of a number of important unions in the state, along with a coordinated Democratic campaign, she hoped to upset Hambrick in this race. In the end, Hambrick pulled the race out easily.

Hambrick	14,461
Sherwood	13,392

AD4 (Richard McArthur - R vs. Connie Munk - D)

This district, once thought to be a GOP stronghold, has grown competitive over the years. McArthur, the incumbent, has not endeared himself to members of his own caucus, or even many of the regular interest groups in Carson City, due to his disinterest and unwillingness to find middle ground and is lack of "work across the aisle" demeanor. As the district has trended Democratic in nature, his race grew increasingly more challenging. Munk is the latest challenger to try to unseat McArthur. This race went down to the final ballots and when all the votes were counted newcomer Connie Munk had beaten Richard McArthur by 112 votes.

McArthur	14,305
Munk	14,417
Lystrup	665

AD8 (Tina Peetris - R vs. Jason Frierson - D)

Some in the GOP circles had thought that Frierson might be vulnerable this election cycle. Having been beaten four years ago in the 2014 midterm, several GOP officials felt that they could take out the big fish this time around. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Frierson easily won his re-election, and in all likelihood will return as Speaker of the Assembly.

Peetris	7,624
Frierson	11,602

AD12 (Richard Fletcher - R vs. Susan Martinez - D)

This seat was left open by the departure of James Ohrenschall to the State Senate. Some in the Fletcher camp had thought that Martinez was vulnerable, and that Democrats would be asleep at the switch. However, as we have told all of our clients, voter registration numbers matter, and in a district where Democrats outnumber Republicans nearly two to one, Martinez was a shoo-in, and easily cruised to victory.

Fletcher	10,059
Susan Martinez	12,617
Mary Martinez	729

AD13 (Tom Roberts - R vs. Leonard Foster - IAP)

This seat was left open due to Assembly Minority Leader Paul Anderson's departure to GOED. As a result, Tom Roberts was handpicked by Anderson as his successor. Roberts blew his competition out of the water in the Primary and easily cruised to victory on Tuesday. Look for Roberts to quickly rise up the ranks of GOP leadership, and perhaps ascend to be the leader of that caucus in the not too distant future.

Roberts	16,901
Foster	9,160

AD22 (Melissa Hardy - R vs. Kristee Watson - D)

This seat was left open when Keith Pickard decided to run for the State Senate. As a result, two newcomers faced off against one another. Hardy is a successful small business woman and Watson is an energetic stay-at-home mother who is involved in a family-owned printing business. Both candidates are superb, and either would represent the district well; it is actually a shame that one of them had to lose. In the end, Hardy beat back Watson in a race that was closer than expected.

Hardy	16,967
Watson	14,239

AD29 (Stephen Silberkraus - R vs. Lesley Cohen - D)

These two have run against one another for the last three election cycles, with each taking a victory lap. The closeness of the voter registration in this district portended a battle royal in terms of who could turn out their voting base best. When all the votes were in, Cohen easily beat back Silberkraus.

Silberkraus	12,076
Cohen	13,379
James-Newman	579

AD31 (Jill Dickman - R vs. Skip Daly - D)

Like AD29, these two candidates have run against one another over the last three election cycles with each claiming victory. On paper, this should be a GOP seat, but the incumbent Daly has been adept at his ability to secure votes in this GOP stronghold. While many more GOP voters turned out in this race than Democrats, once again Daly defied the odds and beat Dickman.

Dickman	13,949
Daly	15,054

AD35 (David Schoen - R vs. Michelle Gorelow - D)

This was an open seat left vacant after incumbent Justin Watkins opted to not seek re-election and instead focus on his law practice. As we discussed above in the brief on SD9, this seat is also nested within all of the activity centered around the State Senate race and the County Commission race. It comes as no surprise that Gorelow emerged victorious along with other Democrats in the area due to the strong concentration of Democratic effort to keep this seat in their control. While Schoen was an attractive young candidate with a great story, he was swept up in the mini blue wave that occurred in this part of Southern Nevada. After the first returns arrived, it was obvious that Gorelow had easily defeated Schoen.

Schoen	11,408
Gorelow	14,237
Hofstein	2,883

AD36 (Dennis Hof - R vs. Leisa Romanov - D)

Only in Nevada can a race like this happen. This seat became open after Hof defeated incumbent James Oscarson in the GOP Primary. Hof's notoriety came from his ownership of brothels both in the north and the south, and his outspoken nature as the self-professed Trump of Pahrump.

Favored to win, Hof died unexpectedly following his 72nd birthday party. Because of the closeness of his death to the election, Hof remained on the ballot against Romanov, who is an employee in the Clark County School system. Because this district encompasses parts of three counties - Clark, Lincoln and Nye - three county commissions will now have to meet to choose his successor, with Nye getting a greater proportional share of the representative vote. Former Assemblyman James Oscarson, who was defeated in the Primary by Hof is expected to get a look, but while he won Clark and Lincoln counties, he lost to Hof in Nye. Stay tuned for this replacement, but in the larger scheme of things, whomever is appointed to represent this area will not change the overall composition of the Assembly. The four names that are cropping up for the appointment are Joe Brezenski, the Nye County GOP Chairman, an unknown resident in Clark County who lives in the district and knows an Assemblyman, Dr. Joseph Bradley, who ran in the Primary and lost to Hof, and James Oscarson, the former Assemblyman from the district.

Hof	5,496
Romanov	4,871

AD37 (Jim Marchant - R vs. Shea Backus - D)

Interestingly, this is one of those seats in the Assembly that have a history of moving between parties. Created in the 2001 reapportionment efforts as a Democratic seat, then redistricted more as a GOP seat after the 2010 reapportionment effort, the trend over the last few election cycles has been that the seat appears to be tilting more to the control of the Democrats. The 2018 election cycle proved that to be the case as first-time candidate Shea Backus defeated incumbent Jim Marchant by a mere 120 votes.

Marchant	13,951
Backus	14,071

AD41 (Paris Wade - R vs. Sandra Jauregui - D)

Sandra Jauregui is the incumbent Assemblywoman from the area who won the seat two years ago. She was the target of some business groups due to her aggressive legislation that was deemed by some to be anti-business. Her challenger, Paris Wade, ran an aggressive internet and social media-based campaign. Midsummer polling that Wade was shopping around showed him within striking distance of Jauregui. However, when all the votes were counted, Sandra ran away with the race and easily won a return trip to Carson City.

Wade	10,723
Jauregui	12,816

Elected to the Assembly or Re-elected to the Assembly

AD1 - Daniele Monroe-Moreno - D

AD3 - Selena Torres - D

AD5 - Brittney Miller - D

AD6 - William McCurdy, II - D

AD7 - Dina Neal - D

AD9 - Steve Yeager - D

AD10 - Chris Brooks - D

AD11 - Olivia Diaz - D

AD14 - Maggie Carlton - D

AD15 - Howard Watts, III - D

AD16 - Heidi Swank - D
AD17 - Tyrone Thompson - D
AD18 - Richard Carrillo - D
AD19 - Chris Edwards - R
AD20 - Ellen Spiegel - D
AD21 - Ozzie Fumo - D
AD23 - Glen Leavitt - R
AD24 - Sarah Peters - D
AD25 - Jill Tolles - R
AD26 - Lisa Krasner - R
AD27 - Teresa Benitez-Thompson - D
AD28 - Edgar Flores - D
AD30 - Mike Sprinkle - D
AD32 - Alexis Hansen - R
AD33 - John Ellison - R
AD34 - Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod - D
AD38 - Robin Titus - R
AD39 - Jim Wheeler - R
AD40 - Al Kramer - R
AD42 - Alexander Assefa - D

Impact for Henderson Chamber of Commerce & Business In General

Buckle up your boot straps, this is going to be a TOUGH session. If you thought last session was difficult, this is likely to be even more of a challenge. Will Democrats overreach? Maybe?

The Democratic wave that swept our state is not what the Chamber or the majority of its members had hoped for, but now it is a reality. If the Democrats hope to stay in power, moderation and showing how they can work with the business community on some of its core issues will be essential. Many in the leadership ranks understand that. The key is whether the rank and file members also get it.

Elections have consequences. And as for the Chamber, we must work to build alliances with members of the Legislature that we did not endorse. That will be difficult, but not impossible. The state is trending from purple to blue and the business community MUST figure out how to live, compete and excel in that new political paradigm.

Conclusion

Nevada has a new Governor and his name is Steve Sisolak. He is the first Democratic Governor elected in Nevada in over 20 years. More importantly, he is the first Clark County Commissioner to become Governor. His challenge will be to reign in Democratic expectations. He is a moderate, small businessman. He is a skilled politician who plays the game well. He is a dealmaker, and he will want to bring people together for the betterment of the state. How he will deal with the majorities in both the State Senate and State Assembly is yet to be determined. He and Speaker Frierson are close, and that should prove helpful. We expect that Democrats may carry out work to move forward on critical issues - from minimum wage to right-to-work to construction defects; all of those 41 vetoed bills from the 2017 session are now back in play.

On the larger front, Nevada is no longer a swing state. Following two successive elections, we are clearly a solid blue state now with a Democratic Governor, and Democratic majorities in both houses for the first time in over two decades. Once a state that proceeded cautiously on public policy issues, today legislators want to blaze new trails across the United States and show that we know how to do things. Most importantly, the impact of the voters' decisions this election cycle will be felt for the next decade, as Governor-elect Sisolak will oversee reapportionment in the state, and women now largely dominate the political landscape in Carson City. Outgoing Governor Sandoval created the New Nevada with the likes of Tesla, Switch, Apple and other new industries. Likewise, incoming Governor-elect Sisolak will set the pathway forward for the state for the next 20-30 years.



Report prepared by Carrara Nevada, which serves as the Henderson Chamber of Commerce's contract lobbying firm.