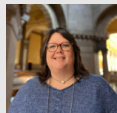




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Three I's dominate election results



Niki Kelly
Indiana Capital Chronicle

As the results rolled in Tuesday night it became clear the 2024 general election was about the Three I's: inflation, immigration and independents.

And all three favored Republicans in what can only be called a trouncing nationally and in Indiana.

President-elect Donald Trump's victory was larger than expected, and the Senate also flipped to the GOP. Control of the U.S. House has not been finalized but also is trending Republican.

In Indiana, voters chose their fourth consecutive Republican governor. And despite some intrigue in the final weeks, it wasn't even close. Neither was the attorney general or U.S. Senate races.

And while Democrats had hoped to put a dent in legislative GOP supermajorities, at this point, not a single seat has changed hands. A few remain close with final ballots being counted.

Which brings me back to the Three I's.

Inflation

Inflation is something hard for any candidate to overcome. It's in every gallon of milk or carton of eggs people buy. It's there every time they write a check for their rent or mortgage. And it's in the shrinking pot of discretionary money for vacations or home improvements.

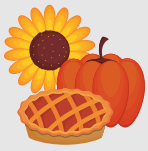


Conservative pollster Christine Matthews noted on X that high inflation produces one-term presidencies. The highest rates were under former Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, and the outgoing President Joe Biden.

Some thought this election would be a referendum on abortion and reproductive rights. But after two cycles it is clear the issue doesn't swing elections — especially here in Indiana. When given the opportunity to vote directly on abortion access, many Americans support such freedoms. But Hoosiers have limited access to ballot measures. And when stacked next to wages and the economy, voters — especially those in the working class — place those issues higher.

Immigration

Next up is immigration. Even those supportive and welcoming of immigrants coming to the United States were bothered by the pace and scope of the border crossings. And Republicans did a masterful job of ramping up the fear around crime and illegal voting.



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Democrats, meanwhile, underestimated its impact from early on in President Joe Biden's term.

Exit polling showed immigration was not the primary issue for voters but regularly ranked in the top five.

About 57% of voters in an October New York Times/Siena College poll said they supported deporting immigrants living in the country illegally, including about 30% of Democrats and 58% of independents. (About 85% of Republicans supported deportation.)

Independents

And speaking of independents, with Republicans and Democrats entrenched on either side, the voters in the middle had their say.

Self-identified independents accounted for a larger share of voters in Tuesday's U.S. presidential election than Democrats and were tied with Republicans, Reuters reported. The independent share stood at 34% in the latest update of the Edison Research exit poll, compared with 34% for Republicans and 32% for Democrats.

Republicans on the state and national levels now have mandates — and it's time to govern. On the state level, I expect complex discussions on helping poor residents with medical care, cutting taxes while maintaining services and improving Indiana's economy.

Hopefully, our leaders will use that mandate judiciously and responsibly, and treat all Hoosiers with respect and empathy. _____

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