

Written by Kathy

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By Kathy Wray Coleman, editor

CLEVELAND, Ohio—Ohio and Cuyahoga County voters took to the polls on Tuesday for the closely-watched primary election, which came with few surprises in predicted races such as the U.S. Senate race in Ohio and a judicial contest involving controversial County Common Pleas Judge Nancy Margaret Russo and her Democratic primary opponent, Carl Mazzone. He trounced her following opposition to her candidacy from Cleveland area community activists and her own county Democratic Party, not to mention the lack of an endorsement from the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Ohio's largest newspaper.

Activists elated over Russo's numbing loss said Tuesday that "it shows the power of community organizing and an organized vote at the ballot box, and is a message to other unfair judges that their unfair actions and malfeasance against the Black community and other vulnerable groups have noticeable and sometimes career damaging consequences."

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"What goes around, often comes around," one activist said.

Voter turnout on Tuesday in Cuyahoga County, a Democratic stronghold that includes the largely Black city of Cleveland, was 21 percent.

With the Plain Dealer's endorsement in hand, coupled with support from several of Russo's foe's, Mazzone, 40, beat Judge Russo 61 percent to her 39 percent, according to unofficial results of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections. He does not face a Republican opponent in November.

Notably, Veteran Common Pleas Judge Nancy Margaret Russo, 67 and under fire from community activists, lost by a large margin to Mazzone for the seat that came open following Judge Daniel Gaul's suspension last year from the bench for misconduct, Mazzone an assistance county prosecutor under County Prosecutor Mike O'Malley.

Also on the ballot, O'Malley easily beat out challenger Matthew Ahn and has no Republican opponent for the general election. And while he lost the endorsement from the state Democratic Party, he was endorsed by the Plain Dealer.

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On the bench since 1997 and rarely without controversy, Judge Russo's current six-year term ends in January of 2027, and she will be too old to run again since state law has an age limit of 70 for judges in Ohio, unless completing an elected term or serving as a stand-in retired judge.

Russo is the second common pleas judge targeted by activists for alleged impropriety in recent years, behind Common Pleas Judge John O'Donnell, who lost three bids for the Ohio Supreme Court with the help of Black Cleveland activists and Black leaders upset over his bench acquittal of a former White Cleveland cop (Michael Brelo) of voluntary manslaughter charges for viciously gunning down two unarmed Blacks in 2012 following a car chase. O'Donnell ran unopposed Tuesday, though still under scrutiny from activists and Black people for his prejudicial behavior on the bench.

Turning to the U.S. Senate race in Ohio, GOP front-runner candidate and businessman Bernie Moreno pulled through with former President Donald Trump's powerful endorsement, winning the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate over state Sen. Matt Dolan and Secretary of State Frank LaRose, and hoping to unseat Democratic opponent U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown.

Sen Brown is a popular Cleveland Democrat and three-term U.S. senator who ran unopposed in Tuesday's Democratic primary and is the target of GOP operatives nationwide as Congressional Republicans seek to change the Democrats' razor-thin majority in the U.S. Senate by outdoing them in the November election.

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All eyes are on Ohio this year, a state Trump won in 2016 and again in 2020.

Both President Joe Biden and former President Trump, the presumptive nominee for the Republican nomination for president, won overwhelmingly in Ohio's primary Tuesday and are headed for a rematch of the 2020 election that Biden won to oust Trump from office.

Pundits say the November election between the trump-endorsed Moreno and Sen. Sherrod Brown is sure to be exciting after Roe v Wade was overturned in 2022 by the U.S. Supreme Court with Trump's urging and women's rights groups and Democrats won on Nov 7 on the Issue 1 referendum in Ohio, which gave Ohio women the legal right to abortion access and other reproductive rights.

Democratic women's rights activists behind the success of Issue 1 in Ohio are, no doubt, targeting Moreno for taking a stance against Issue 1 and for campaigning during this year's primary election cycle for a national ban on abortion, the GOP's next anti-reproductive rights scheme, they say, and in response to states like Ohio legalizing abortion at the statewide ballot box.

Trump told reporters on Tuesday that he will consider supporting a 15-week federal ban on abortion.

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In other closely watched races relative to Tuesday's primary, there were no surprises regarding state legislative and congressional races, with 11th Congressional District Congresswoman Shontel Brown, who is Black and a Warrensville Hts. Democrat, running unopposed and facing little known opposition in November. Her heavily Democratic district includes Cleveland.

Ohio Supreme Court Justice Melody Stewart, the first Black and first Black woman elected to the state's highest court, was unopposed and appellate judge Lisa Forbes won over appellate judge Terrie Jamison, who is Black, in the fight for another state Supreme Court seat. Democratic Justice Michael Donnelly also was unopposed, and all of three Dems who won will face a Republican in November with Ohio the only state in the nation that can turn its majority Republican state Supreme Court predominately Democratic this year.

Black County Juvenile Court Judge Alison Nelson Floyd won over her Democratic opponent Joseph O'Malley, and Magistrate Joy Kennedy, also Black, ran unopposed for the common pleas seat open due to the retirement of Judge Shirley Strickland Saffold, a Black longtime common pleas judge. Kennedy faces a Republican in November.

Black Common Pleas Judge Cassandra Collier-Williams was unopposed in the primary and so was Judge Lauren Moore, who is Black too and seeks an elevation by voters from the majority Black Cleveland Municipal Court bench to the 8th District Court of Appeals, a policy making appeals court. Neither Collier-Williams nor Moore face an opponent in November.

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Sources say that this year's election will do little, if anything at all, to change what Blacks endure as a people from county judges and prosecutors, collectively.

Data explicitly show that Black adults and juveniles in Cuyahoga County are disproportionately indicted, prosecuted, and imprisoned in comparison to their White counterparts, and that racism and public corruption routinely plague the 34-member largely White general division common pleas court and the county prosecutor's office.

[Clevelandurbannews.com](http://Clevelandurbannews.com) and [Kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com](http://Kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com) , the most read Black digital newspaper in Ohio and in the Midwest, and the most read independent digital news in Ohio. Tel: (216)

659-0473. Email: [editor@clevelandurbannews.com](mailto:editor@clevelandurbannews.com).

We interviewed former president Barack Obama one-on-one when he was campaigning for president. As to the Obama interview.

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