



Immigration Supporters Optimistic After Midterm Results

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Immigration advocates are measuring success in Tuesday's midterm elections from the state capitals to Washington, D.C., not just by who won, but also by who lost.

"We saw these patterns repeat from Maine to California, where anti-immigrant state leaders were rejected in favor of legislators who advance a more inclusive vision of our country," Kamal Essaheb, director of policy and advocacy at the National Immigration Law Center, said during a call with media Wednesday.

Republican Eddie Smith of Tennessee, who had voted to block in-state tuition for undocumented students, lost to Democrat Gloria Johnson, a supporter of tuition equality, for a seat in the state's House of Representatives.

In Wisconsin, Republican Gov. Scott Walker lost a bid for a third term to Democrat Tony Evers. In recent years, Walker had shifted away from supporting comprehensive immigration reform to a platform he described in 2015 as "anti-immigration because I listened" to the public.

Kris Kobach, said to be the dominant voice behind several immigration-reducing plans on President Donald Trump's agenda, lost the race for Kansas governor. Democrat Abigail Spanberger defeated Representative Dave Brat of Virginia, who also aligns with Trump's immigration views on the need for a border wall and on the travel bans.

And in Oregon, voters rejected a measure to repeal the state's immigrant sanctuary law — a decades-old law that was the first of its type in the country.

"We stopped the anti-immigrant movement in their tracks," Andrea Williams, executive director of Causa Oregon, an immigrant rights organization, said during a call with reporters Wednesday. "In a time when Oregon was on display for the whole nation to see, we voted with our values, and we voted on a law that has worked well for our state for many decades now."

Democrats — largely favorable to pro-immigration laws compared with their Republican counterparts — won enough seats in the U.S. House of Representatives to block further attempts through Congress to bolster Trump's efforts to restrict immigration. David Bier, an immigration policy analyst at the Libertarian Cato Institute in Washington, called Tuesday's outcome the "most pro-immigration House of Representatives in over a century."

Republicans still maintain control of the U.S. Senate. The House cannot pass any substantive immigration laws on its own, but it can prevent the Trump administration from passing anti-immigration legislation.

Polls show most Americans are not anti-immigration. More than at any other time since 1965 — when the U.S. overhauled its immigration laws — Americans favor increases in immigration from the current level, or at the very least maintaining the status quo, according to polling data from Gallup earlier this year.

Adding to the pessimism for those who want to curb immigration is the ruling upheld by an appeals court Thursday blocking the Trump administration from ending the Obama-era program that protects young undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children from being deported.

The ruling from a panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals means a nationwide injunction allowing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to continue will remain in effect.

The ruling came just after the announcement Wednesday evening that U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions would be stepping down.

Mark Krikorian, head of the Center for Immigration Studies, which favors lower immigration numbers, tweeted, "Even with a Republican House nothing got enacted, and that will just continue for the next 2 years. But with Sessions gone, not much of note will get done administratively, either."