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Larry Hogan gets unprecedented win in governor's race on public financing

Maryland governor-elect vows a bipartisan administration

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Maryland Gov.-elect Larry Hogan pledged to assemble a bipartisan administration after his defeat of heavily favored Lt. Gov. Anthony G. Brown — a victory made all the more stunning in that he became the first candidate in state history to win a gubernatorial race after accepting public financing.

Although Mr. Hogan was widely outspent on the campaign trail, the final results showed 54 percent of Marylanders voted for the Republican compared to the 45 percent who supported Democrat Mr. Brown.

At a morning news conference Wednesday, Mr. Hogan appeared ready to move past the election.

"The campaign is now over and the governing begins," said Mr. Hogan, who is only the second GOP governor elected in the deep-blue state since 1969.

Mr. Hogan, as he did regularly on the campaign trail, pledged to cut spending and roll back tax hikes, but he declined to discuss "detailed policy issues" that he said will be addressed in the course of the transition.

His win came after he received a grant of \$2.6 million in state campaign funding. He was the first gubernatorial candidate in a general election in 20 years to draw from the fund, which also permitted the state GOP to additionally raise as much as \$1.8 million on his behalf.

But his numbers paled in comparison to the \$7 million Mr. Brown and state Democrats raised for the general election, according to campaign finance reports.

"While Brown had to go around and focus on raising money, Hogan didn't have to do that. He got to immediately focus on campaigning and he got his money sooner," said Todd Eberly, associate professor and coordinator of public policy studies at St. Mary's College of Maryland.

While Mr. Brown was busy courting his donor base after a competitive Democratic Party primary, Mr. Hogan was able to campaign in Maryland communities.

"I think it was a good thing. I think he made the right decision," said Telly Lovelace, a D.C.-based political consultant. "He proved that the candidate with the most money doesn't always win."

In the end, what helped Mr. Hogan was a general dissatisfaction with Mr. Brown and Gov. Martin O'Malley.

"The election in Maryland was one in which there wasn't a great deal of enthusiasm for the O'Malley/Brown administration," said Norman Ornstein, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

Walter Olson, a senior fellow at the CATO Institute, said Mr. Hogan's win "should encourage all of us who have been saying all along that, although money can be important, it's not what the left makes it out to be as far as money buying elections."

The trouncing of Mr. Brown also served as a rebuke to Mr. O'Malley, under whom Mr. Brown served for two terms, and President Obama, who campaigned for Mr. Brown.

Mr. Hogan on Wednesday pledged to work across the aisle with elected leaders in the state, where the legislature is overwhelmingly Democratic and registered Democrats outnumber Republicans 2-1.

"This victory was not a partisan one," Mr. Hogan said. "Nearly half our votes came from Democrats and independents."

The Republican's victory could partly be attributed to winning big in Baltimore County, where he captured about 61 percent of the vote. Mr. Hogan also won big in Anne Arundel County, garnering about 67 percent of the vote.

Mr. Brown won Prince George's and Montgomery counties, reliably Democratic strongholds in the D.C. suburbs, as well as the city of Baltimore. But it wasn't enough to offset the lopsided results across the state.

Asked whether he was surprised at the margin of victory statewide, given that his candidacy had been all but dismissed by analysts, Mr. Hogan responded, "The pollsters and the pundits and the talking heads and the media all seemed to talk to each other. And it's sort of an echo chamber. I was talking to Marylanders."