

Democracy on the Ballot

Voters' intentions and actions in battleground states in the midterm elections

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Research By

Public Wise
Research & Education Fund



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All data analysis conducted by Public Wise
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DATA

Polling data

October 2021 national sample,
paid for by PWREF 501(c)3

February 2022 national sample,
paid for by PWREF 501(c)3

August 2022 battleground state
registered voters, paid for by PW 501(c)4

All polling fielded by Change Research

Candidate and win/loss data

Insurrection Index compiled
by Public Wise 501(c)4

Introduction

As we mark the two-year anniversary of the January 6 insurrection, it is important to remember the chaos and violence that unfolded that day. Two years ago, a mob of supporters of then-President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol building in an attempt to disrupt the certification of President Joe Biden's election win. The attack left five people dead and resulted in widespread condemnation from both sides of the aisle.

The subsequent investigation taken up by the congressional committee demonstrated that these events were not carried out spontaneously by a mob, but were a concerted, highly-orchestrated campaign to overturn the results of the U.S. election by force, corruption, and manipulation of key loci of power in the U.S. government.

Despite the historical significance and political outpour in the wake of the events, January 6th was not central to the messaging of political campaigns in the first nationwide elections held after the attack on the Capitol.

The ad-tracking firm AdImpact noted that ads focused on January 6 constituted less than 2 percent of all broadcast TV spending in House races for the midterms cycle.

Many pundits speculated that the midterm elections would result in a "red wave" of Republican candidates sweeping seats across the country, including those who participated in or publicly supported the January 6 insurrection or promoted its foundational idea of the "Big Lie."

But these expectations were upended by a much more muted turn of events, with Democrats holding on to many more positions than expected. In particular, in several state-level races where a more pro-January 6 Republican candidate shared the ballot with a Republican candidate without direct ties to the attack on the Capitol, the results seemed to suggest that many voters "split their tickets" against January 6-affiliated Republican candidates, instead of voting down the ballot for Republicans. The losses of many high-profile insurrectionist candidates who denied the results of the 2020 elections, such as Kari Lake in Arizona and Doug Mastriano in Pennsylvania, were heralded as a victory for democracy.

So, was democracy "on the ballot" in the 2022 midterms despite the lack of concerted focus by campaigns to put it front and center?

Our research suggests yes, but with some caveats. It depends largely on whether or not the candidate was an incumbent and somewhat less on the specifics of what kind of anti-democracy actions candidates had taken and what level of office they were running for.



A slight majority of registered voters in every battleground state we surveyed (Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania) rejected core tenets of the Big Lie, and candidates running for state-wide office in these states who promoted the Big Lie performed disproportionately poorly in the elections – 67% of them lost their races.

But district-level candidates who supported the Big Lie fared better in these battleground states, losing only 36% of their races. Looking across the country, candidates running for both state-wide and district-level positions who supported the Big Lie did poorly, losing 56% of their races overall.

In general, candidate losses in relation to January 6th involvement were concentrated around certain types of involvement – voters were especially reluctant to cast their ballots for candidates who had been physically present at the Capitol or who endorsed the Big Lie. We also found that candidates who received endorsements by former President Donald Trump fared worse than those who did not.

Disappointingly, incumbents who engaged in anti-democratic actions were largely immune to these negative effects, with all but three insurrectionist incumbents winning their races.

Furthermore, while potential voters expressed varying levels of tolerance toward different types of January 6 involvement, in practice, candidates elected on a state-wide basis were most likely to be punished at the ballot box. Those running in district-level races were largely successful at winning their elections.

Summary of Key Takeaways

- Of 344 Insurrectionist candidates* on the ballot, over half (221) were elected.
 - 72% (159) of elected insurrectionists are in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- Incumbent insurrectionists were successful in general, but newcomer** candidates were mostly unsuccessful in the battleground states of Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania, where we conducted our survey of registered voters.
 - 70% (59/84) of all insurrectionist candidates in these states won their elections. In the rest of the country, 62% (162/260) of all insurrectionist candidates won their elections, although this number was much higher in Republican controlled states and much lower in Democratically controlled states.
 - While 98% (47/48) of incumbent insurrectionist candidates won in these states, 67% (24/36) of newcomer candidates lost their elections.
- Insurrectionist candidates who ran at the district-level (U.S. House of Representatives and State Legislature) fared better than those subjected to state-wide elections (U.S. Senate, Governor, Lt. Governor, State Attorney General and State Treasurer).
 - 69% of district-level insurrectionist candidates were elected compared to 48% of state-wide candidates.
- A majority of registered voters we polled in Public Wise's priority battleground states said they rejected key tenets of the Big Lie and that they would not vote for a candidate who had preemptively asked for a pardon related to January 6 events, nor who had participated in the January 6 fake electors scheme.
- When voters had the opportunity to vote against state-level candidates in Public Wise's priority battleground states who engaged in anti-democratic behaviors that were unpopular in our surveys, such as supporting the Big Lie, they did. Candidates who engaged in actions that were unpopular with voters - like supporting the fraudulent elector scheme or asking for a preemptive pardon - and still won in battleground states typically ran in district-level races and were not accountable to voters in their entire state.
- Insurrectionists who supported the Big Lie or were present at the Capitol on January 6th as civilians lost more elections than they won.
- Democracy does seem to have been on the ballot, particularly when it came to state-wide office. However, more insurrectionists won than lost overall.

While the state-wide victories for pro-democracy candidates were important, they should not give cover to the large number of insurrectionists who were elected to government positions in the U.S. House and in state legislative bodies.

This represents an ongoing threat to democracy that should not be ignored.

* We refer to insurrectionist candidates as anyone listed in Public Wise's Insurrection Index, who have been classified as engaging in one or more activities related to the insurrection.

** Newcomer refers to those who did not previously hold the office for which they ran in the 2022 midterms, including those who held another elected position. We use "newcomer" and "non-incumbent" interchangeably throughout the report.

What Voters Told us They Would Do

The attacks on the Capitol shocked the nation, but it was not immediately clear whether Americans hoped to see participants, especially elected officials, held accountable. Public Wise undertook three surveys at various points between the January 6 attack and the midterm elections in an effort to better understand how Americans perceived the events of January 6th and what they believed were the appropriate responses to elected officials who had varying levels of involvement in January 6.

Our research showed that a majority of Americans thought elected officials should not remain in public office if they participated in certain aspects of January 6; although views on this question were heavily skewed by partisan affiliation.

For every action we included in our survey, Democrats and left-leaning Independents were more likely to say an elected official should not remain in office compared to Republicans and right-leaning Independents, who were less likely to say they should not remain in office.

Americans' views on the unacceptability of involvement depended on the kinds of actions the officials took part in. In our February survey, more than three quarters of Americans, including 59% of Republicans, did not think an elected official should remain in office if they coordinated with protestors in advance to help them understand the Capitol building and how to move within it quickly.

However, Americans were split on whether elected officials should remain in office if they voted against certifying the election or if they paid for buses for people to participate in the rally on January 6th.

More recently, our survey fielded before the 2022 midterm elections focused on registered voters in six key battleground states and asked not only about whether officials should remain in office, but whether registered voters would vote for someone that participated in specific actions, such as preemptively requesting a pardon related to their involvement in January 6th.

We asked the following battery of questions about their attitudes towards public officials and candidates who had been involved in January 6th:

About whether people who participated should be barred from ever holding public office:

Do you support or oppose barring people who participated in the events of January 6th from ever seeking election to or holding public office?

About elected officials who were involved in January 6th:

Do you think an elected official should remain in office if they voted against certifying the election?

Do you think an elected official should remain in office if they spoke at the rally on the mall before the events at the Capitol took place?

Do you think an elected official should remain in office if they paid for buses for people to come hear the rally and participate in a protest?

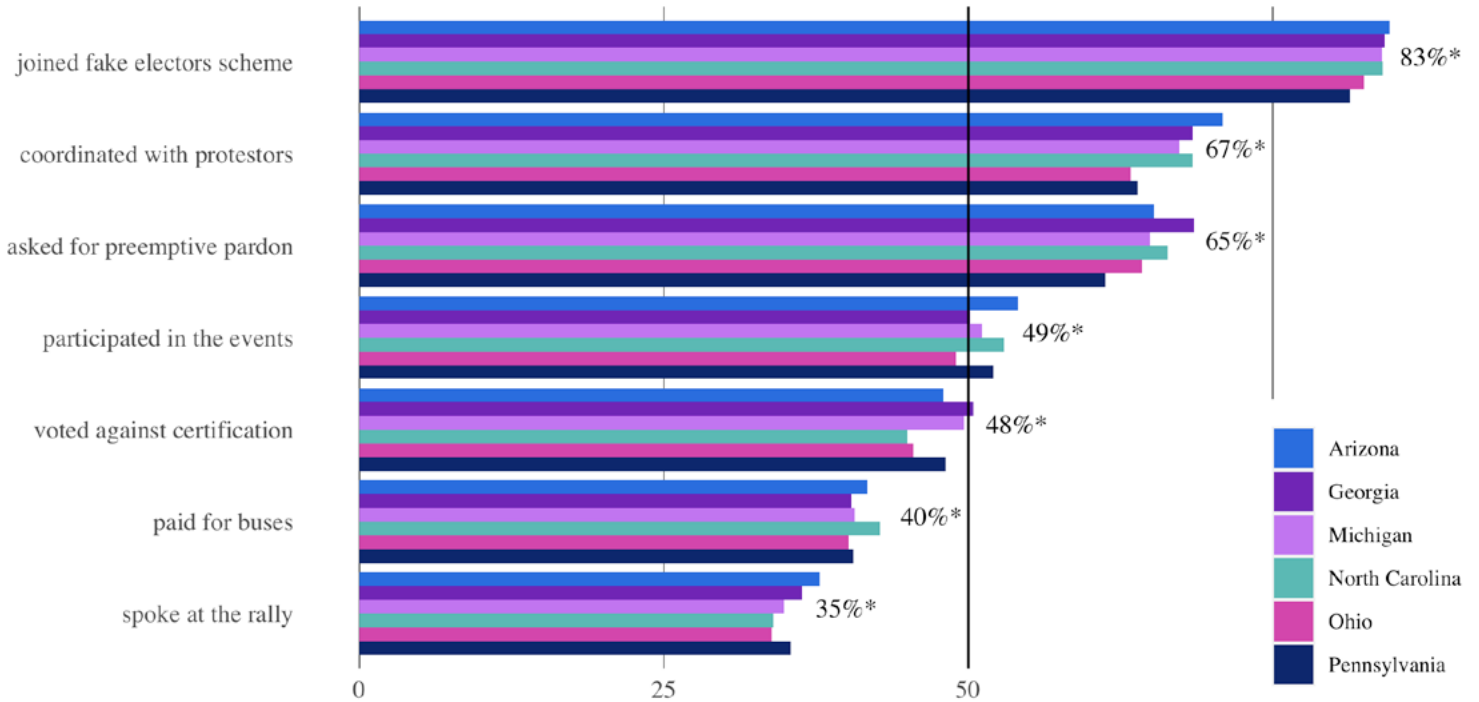
Do you think an elected official should remain in office if they coordinated with protestors in advance to help them understand the Capitol building and how to move within it quickly?

About candidates who were involved in January 6

Would you vote for someone if they preemptively asked for a pardon to cover any and all actions related to the election and its aftermath?

Would you vote for someone if they participated in plans to allow fake electors to cast votes during the electoral vote counting on January 6th?

Percentage registered voters saying an official/candidate should not be in office if they...



Source: Public Wise/ Change Research survey of 4110 Registered Voters in 6 Battleground States
*Pooled State Average

Across these six battleground states, we found that registered voters' intentions to penalize candidates for participation in January 6th varied substantially based on both the question being asked and how the candidates were involved. When asked in the most general sense whether officials had "participated" in the events of January 6th, registered voters in battleground states were about evenly split on whether they supported barring someone from seeking or holding elected office.

Looking at the more specific types of involvement, respondents were relatively forgiving about whether an elected official who had spoken at the rally before the events at the Capitol should remain in office, with just over a third of voters saying they should not remain in office.

On the other hand, a large majority of voters said that they would not vote for candidates who had participated in the fake electors scheme (83%) and a majority said they would not vote for someone who had asked for a preemptive pardon (65%) and that officials who had coordinated with protestors to help them find their way in the Capitol building (67%) should not remain in office.

Beliefs in the Big Lie

The foundational belief motivating the January 6 attack on the Capitol is what has come to be referred to as the “Big Lie”.

The Big Lie is based on the idea that a vast conspiracy had been orchestrated to prevent Trump’s second term in office by illegitimate means. Trump claimed that corrupted voting machines changed votes for him into votes for Biden.

Following the election, many of the former president’s supporters believed he actually won the election, despite nonexistent evidence, multiple failed court cases and election recounts.

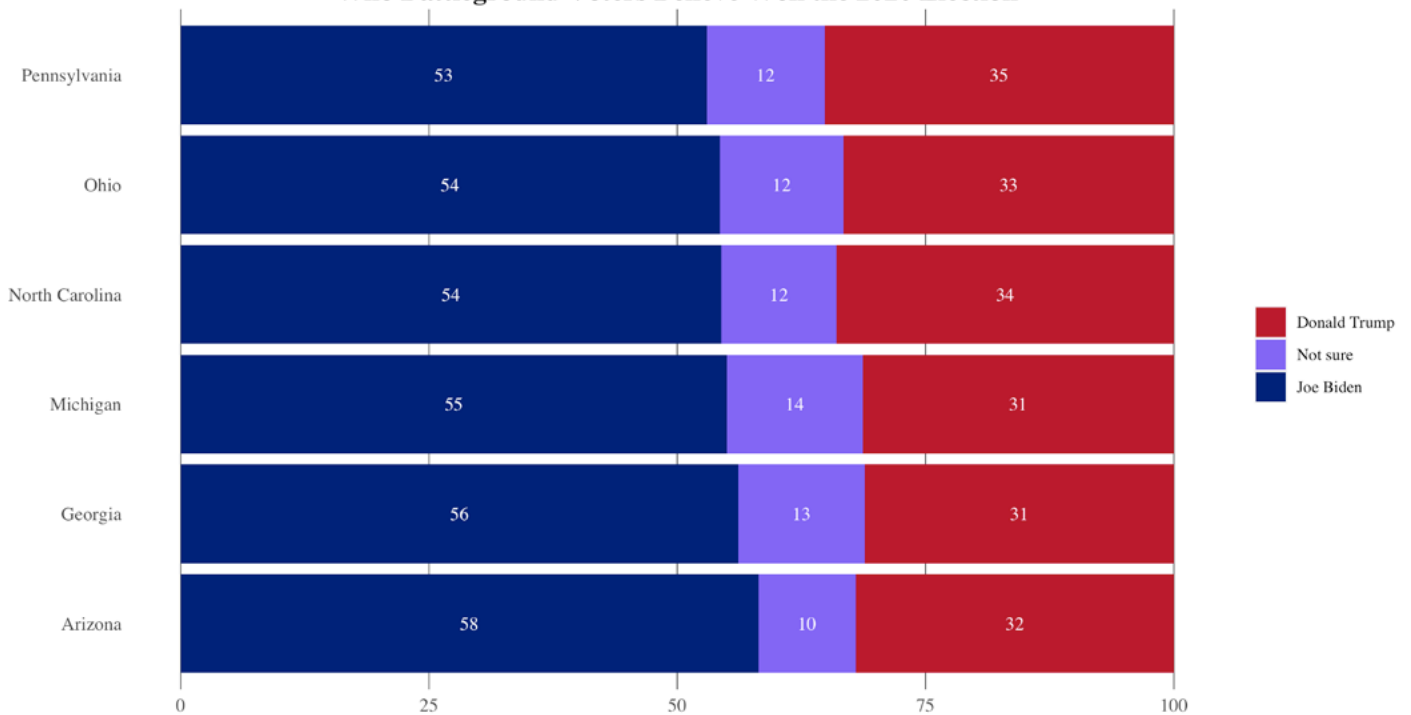
In order to assess registered voters’ beliefs in the Big Lie in battleground states, our survey asked two key questions.

Questions relating to belief in the Big Lie:

“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Electronic voting machines changed votes for Trump into votes for Biden in the November election”

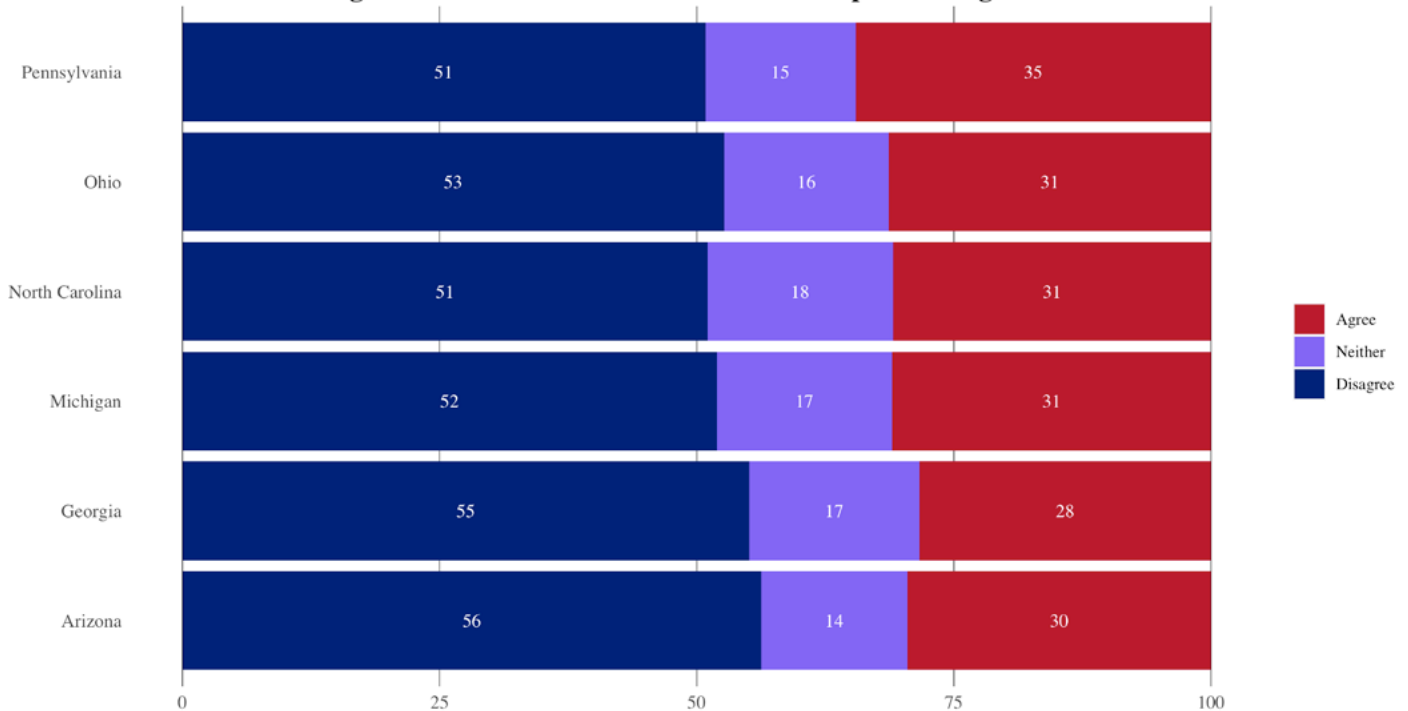
“Who do you believe got more votes in the 2020 election?”

Who Battleground Voters Believe Won the 2020 Election



Source: Public Wise/Change Research Survey of 4110 Adults in 6 US Battleground States

Battleground State Voters' Belief in 2020 Corrupted Voting Machines



Source: Public Wise/Change Research Survey of 4110 Adults in 6 US Battleground States

According to our survey, around a third of voters across these battleground states could be considered believers in the Big Lie. Another 10-18% of registered voters, while not agreeing with the premises of the Big Lie, also would not say that they disagreed with it.

A slight majority firmly rejected these views, with registered voters in Arizona expressing the most trust in the process and registered voters in Pennsylvania expressing the least. While 45% of registered voters in these battleground states said they voted for Trump, far fewer (33%) believed the Big Lie that he had gotten more votes in the election.

Given what voters told us in these battleground states before the election, we would expect insurrectionist candidates who:

- (1) engaged in the fake elector scheme,
- (2) asked for a preemptive pardon, or that
- (3) supported the Big Lie to perform poorly in state-wide elections.

We would also expect that candidates who participated in the events of January 6th by attending the insurrection's events as civilians would lose as many races as they win. But what voters say they will do does not always correspond with their actual voting behaviors.

As precise vote margins continue to roll in, what can we say about how candidates fared based on their involvement in the Big Lie and the events that followed on January 6?

Insurrectionists Running for Office

In addition to polling conducted on Americans' views on the events of January 6th by the Public Wise Research and Education Fund, Public Wise also tracked elected officials and candidates who supported or perpetuated election lies that led to January 6th, or engaged in the activities of the insurrection itself.*

The Insurrection Index has been an invaluable tool for holding elected officials accountable for their actions.

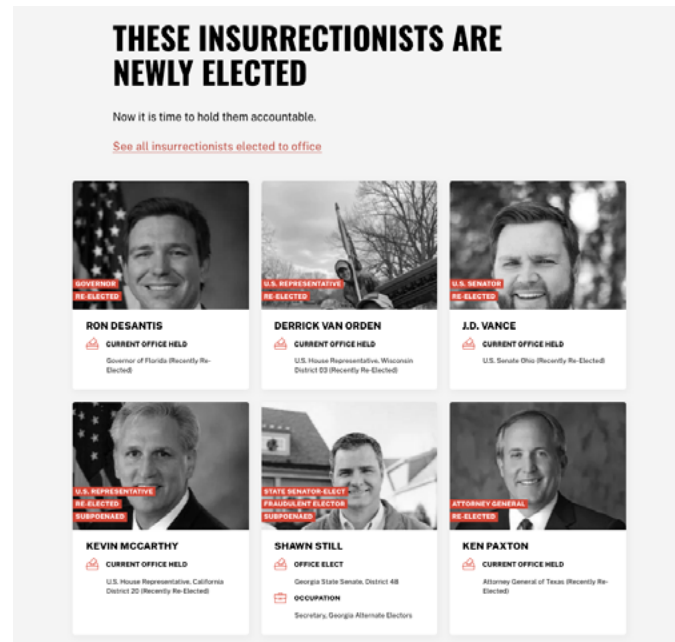
Data from the Index allow us to better understand how involvement in January 6th may have shaped candidates' chances. In the 2022 midterms, 344 insurrectionist candidates from our index ran for offices at all levels of government. In our data, we use the term insurrectionist to refer to any candidate who was involved in January 6th in at least one of the following ways:

- Spreading January 6 disinformation online
- Publicly supporting the Big Lie
- Voting against certifying the election results
- Being present at the Capitol as a civilian
- Being subpoenaed by the January 6 commission
- Being involved in the fraudulent elector scheme
- Supporting January 6th organizing efforts beforehand either logistically or financially
- Requesting a preemptive pardon from Donald Trump for January 6-related actions
- Speaking at the rally before the events at the Capitol.

Nearly all (95%) of the included candidates engaged in two or fewer distinct insurrection actions according to the Insurrection Index criteria. Over half engaged in two actions, 39% engaged in just one action, and the remaining 5% engaged in 3 or more actions.

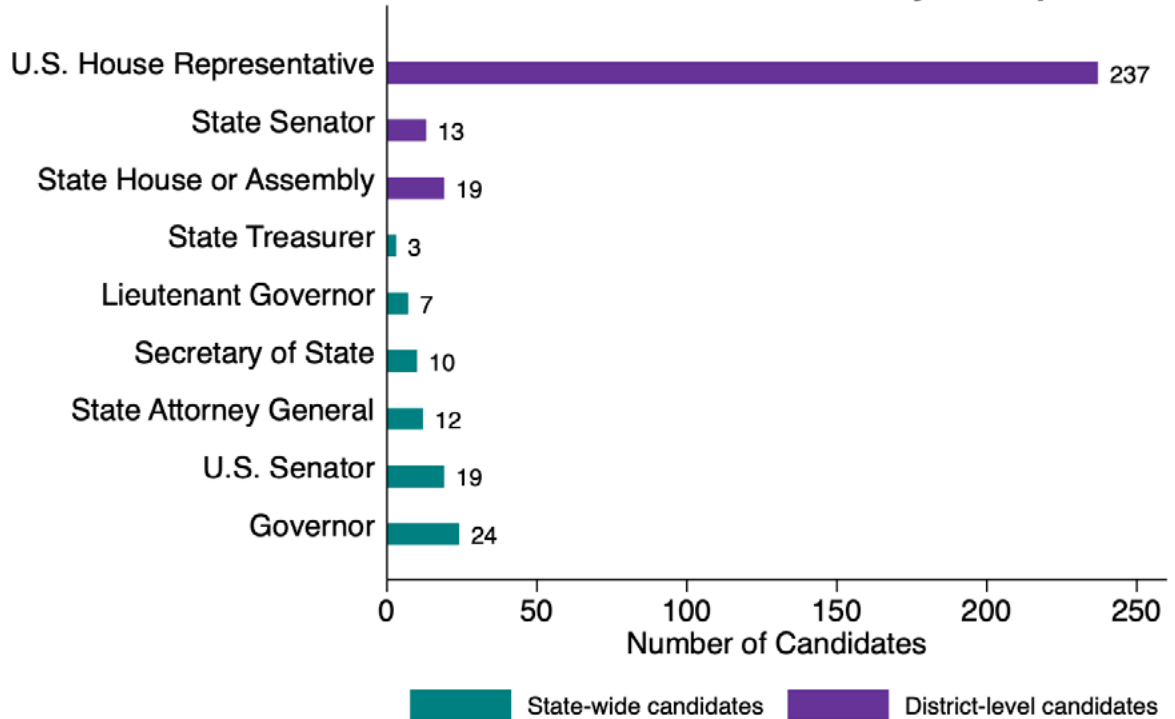
Of the candidates tracked by Public Wise, the majority were not running in state-wide races and therefore were not subject to all voters in the state. 69% (237) of insurrectionist candidates were running as candidates for the United States House of Representatives, which are elected at the district level. Another 9% (32) ran in elections for State Senate or State House/Assembly offices, which are elected within state legislative districts.

The remaining 22% (75) of candidates from the index ran for state-wide offices such as the U.S. Senate, Governor, or Secretary of State.



* October 2021 and February 2022 polling was paid for by the Public Wise Research and Education Fund 501(c)3. August battleground state polling was paid for by Public Wise 501(c)4. The Insurrection Index was created and funded by Public Wise 501(c)4. All data analysis was conducted by Public Wise Research and Education Fund 501(c)3 via a data sharing agreement.

Number of insurrectionist candidates in 2022 midterms by office pursued



Source: Public Wise Insurrection Index

The Index provides a precise breakdown by types of insurrection involvement.

One of the most frequent types of involvement of insurrectionist candidates for U.S. Congress was voting against certifying the election when the House and Senate reconvened after the breach of the Capitol.

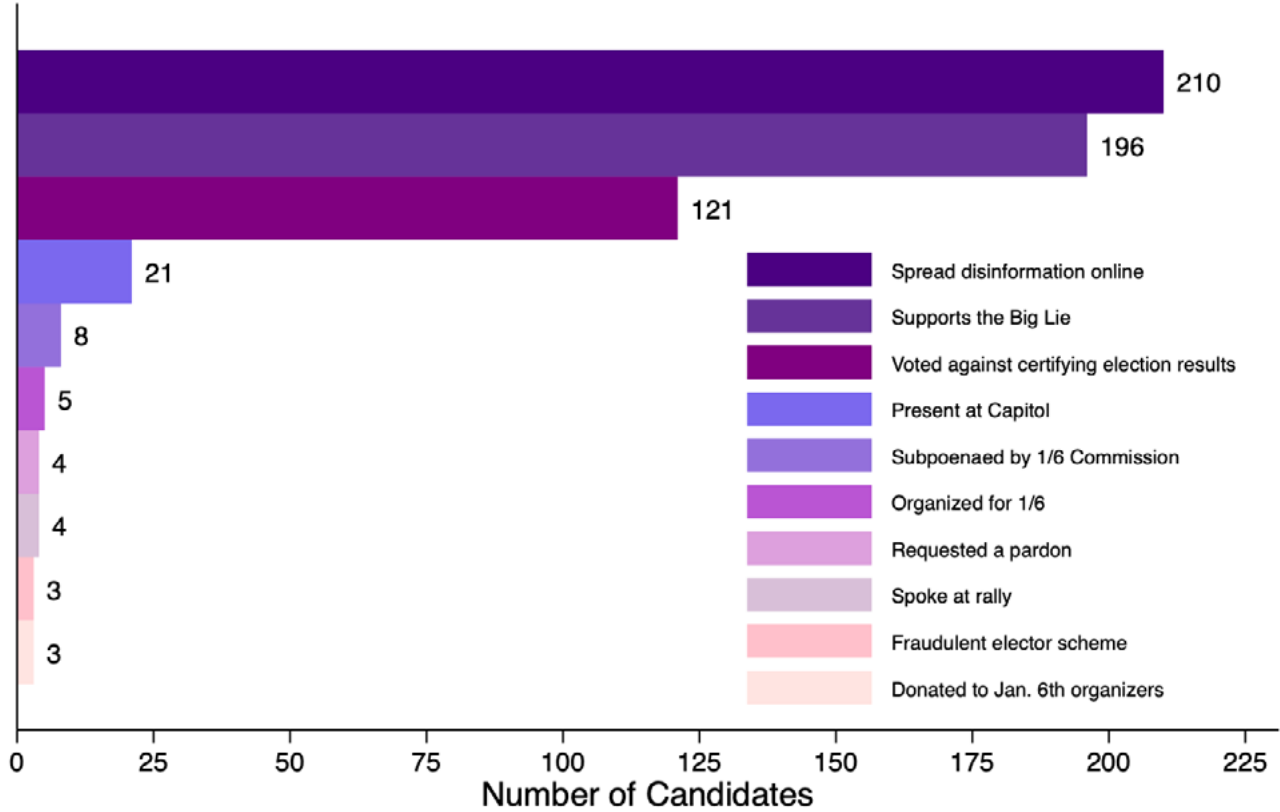
Of the 147 Republicans who voted against certifying the election results, 140 were eligible for reelection in 2022 and 121 ultimately ran as candidates in the 2022 midterms.*

Other forms of participation were less common.

Twenty one candidates in the 2022 general midterm elections were present at the Capitol (as civilians) on January 6th, three donated to the January 6 organizers in advance, and four requested preemptive pardons from Donald Trump to avoid prosecution for their participation in events. More generally, over 196 candidates supported the Big Lie.

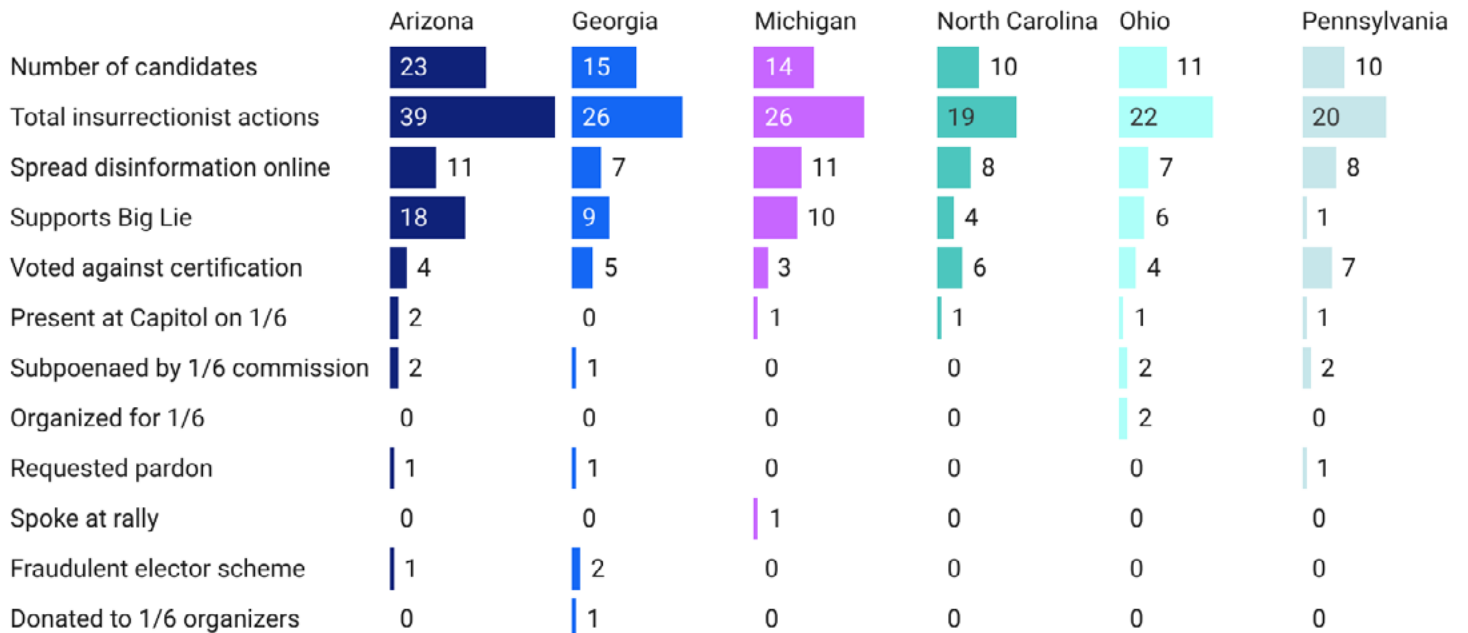
* We only include insurrectionist candidates from the 2022 general election.

Actions taken by 2022 midterm insurrectionist candidates, nationwide



Source: Public Wise Insurrection Index

Actions taken by 2022 midterm candidates across battleground states



Source: Public Wise • Created with Datawrapper

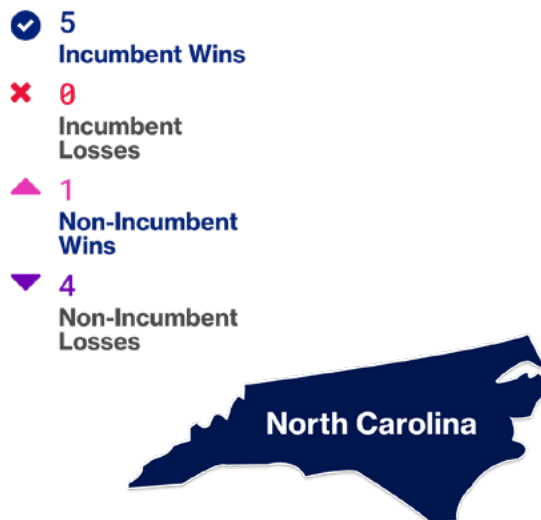
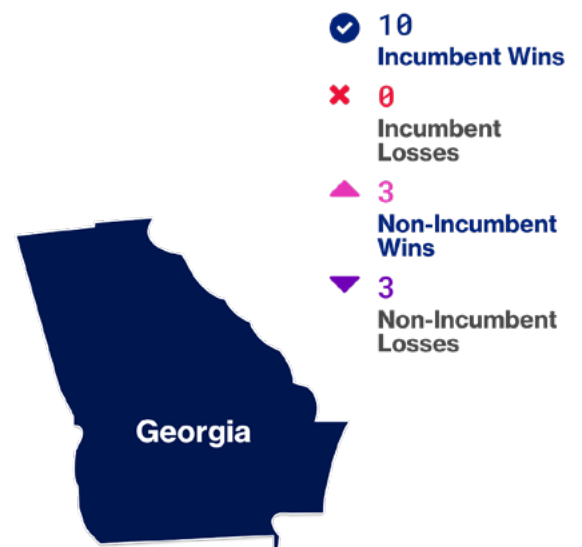
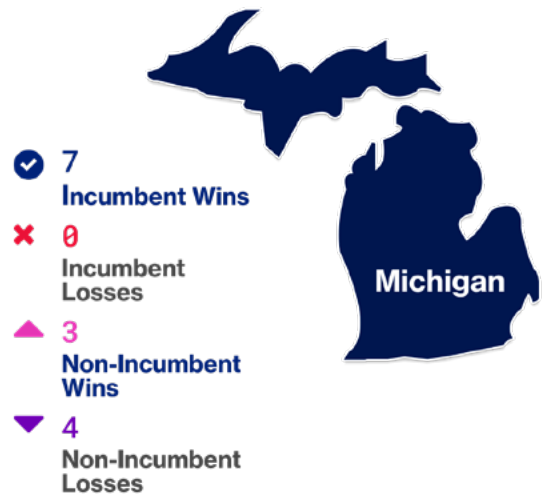
Incumbent Insurrectionists Fared Better Than Non-incumbent Insurrectionist Candidates

How did insurrectionists do in the midterms?
Of these 344 candidates, 221 (64%) won their elections.

Those already in office before 2022 did even better than the average. Incumbent candidates generally have an easier time than challenger candidates in any given election, and incumbent insurrectionists were no exception: 98% of incumbents who participated in January 6th or fostered doubts about the 2020 election were able to hold on to their seats, though the majority ran in district-level races and were not elected by a majority of their entire state's voters. Of the three incumbent insurrectionists who did not win their races, Steve Chabot (OH), Yvette Herrel (NM), and Mayra Flores (TX), all had their seats redrawn into more competitive or Democratic-leaning seats before the election.

The second most common insurrectionist action among incumbent candidates – after spreading disinformation online – was voting against certification, of which registered voters in the battleground states we surveyed seem to be more tolerant. More than half of registered voters in every battleground state we surveyed, with the exception of Georgia, said they would still vote for a candidate who had taken this kind of action.

As an example, in North Carolina, a minority (45%) of registered voters said they would not cast a ballot for someone who had voted against certification. Ted Budd, U.S. Representative for North Carolina's 13th Congressional District, won his U.S. Senate race in the midterms by a considerable margin despite having voted against certification as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and even refusing to say whether he would accept the 2022 election results.





- ✓ 6 Incumbent Wins
- ✗ 1 Incumbent Losses
- ▲ 2 Non-Incumbent Wins
- ▼ 2 Non-Incumbent Losses



- ✓ 12 Incumbent Wins
- ✗ 0 Incumbent Losses
- ▲ 3 Non-Incumbent Wins
- ▼ 8 Non-Incumbent Losses



- ✓ 7 Incumbent Wins
- ✗ 0 Incumbent Losses
- ▲ 0 Non-Incumbent Wins
- ▼ 2 Non-Incumbent Losses

When it comes to candidates for state-wide office, insurrectionist incumbents won every office they ran for, including Chris Carr for Attorney General of Georgia and Dave Yost for Attorney General of Ohio. Carr donated to January 6th organizers, while Yost cast doubt on the results of the 2020 election, perpetuating the Big Lie that fueled the January 6th events.

While incumbency seemed to insulate many insurrectionist candidates from voters' disapproval of January 6th and the Big Lie, newcomer candidates appeared to have a harder time overcoming participation in certain aspects of January 6th and the perpetuation of lies about the 2020 election.

Most (74%) of the non-incumbent insurrectionist candidates running for state-wide offices (Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer or U.S. Senate) lost their races.

Many of these candidates supported the Big Lie and spread misinformation online. But some, like Jo Rae Perkins of Oregon and Dan Cox of Maryland were present in Washington, DC, on January 6 as participants in the Stop the Steal rally.

Some were even involved in multiple insurrectionist actions, including Doug Mastriano of Pennsylvania, who was present at the Capitol on January 6 and later subpoenaed by the January 6th commission and Mark Finchem of Arizona, who spread disinformation online and was also subpoenaed by the January 6th commission.

Among non-incumbent, district-level insurrectionist candidates, the majority (81/107) did not win their elections. 90% of district-level newcomer candidates supported the Big Lie, and most of these candidates lost their elections (74/96). For example, Jeff Zink, who ran in Arizona's 3rd congressional district and J.R. Majewski, who ran in Ohio's 9th congressional district, lost their elections. They were both at the Capitol on January 6th and supported the Big Lie.

Only 14 (26%) state-wide newcomer insurrectionist candidates were elected. One of them is Burt Jones, who was elected as the Lieutenant Governor of Georgia. He supported the fraudulent election scheme to overturn the 2020 election results. In our poll, over 75% of registered voters in Georgia said they would not vote for someone who participated in the fake elector scheme. However, Jones was able to win this state-wide office despite engaging in this action.

One explanation for Jones winning despite not being an incumbent and engaging in an action that was broadly unpopular with Georgia voters is that he was running for a lower profile state-wide position for which there is generally less publicity and information available. Being on the ticket with Governor Brian Kemp, a fellow Republican who is popular among Georgians and who upheld President Biden's legitimate win in Georgia, may have also contributed to his winning.

While evidence suggests that Georgia voters engaged in ticket splitting, insurrectionist candidates running for less visible positions like Lieutenant Governor may have more easily slipped under voters' radars.

While Burt Jones may have been able to win his election, most other non-incumbent candidates who engaged in insurrectionist actions, such as being present at the Capitol on January 6th, were penalized by voters in their states.



For example, Doug Mastriano, the far-right gubernatorial candidate in Pennsylvania who vocally endorsed the Big Lie, chartered buses to the Capitol, and was close enough to the violence on January 6th that he was able to record it on his cellphone.

Of the registered voters we polled in Pennsylvania, roughly half supported barring someone who participated in January 6th from holding public office.

Over a third did not think someone who paid for buses to the January 6th rally should hold elected office. Mastriano lost the race by a wide margin, winning just 41.7% of the vote.

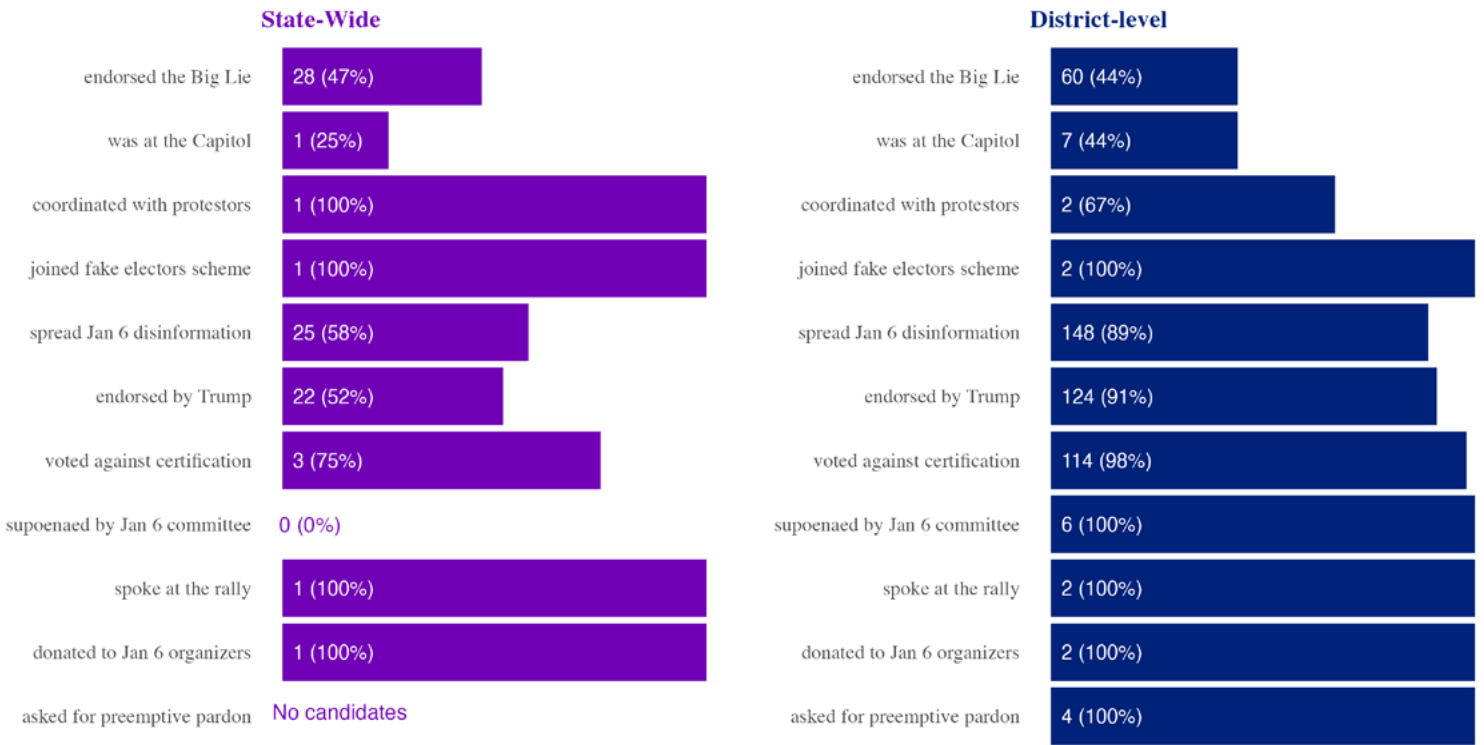
Exit polls suggest that one reason his vote share was low was because 18% of registered Republicans voted for his opponent, Governor Elect Josh Shapiro, over him.

Pre-election Polling and Vote Results

Generally, when voters in Public Wise priority battleground states had the opportunity to vote against state-level candidates who engaged in anti-democratic behaviors that our polling showed were unpopular, such as believing in the Big Lie, they did.

Battleground state candidates who won despite engaging in unpopular insurrectionist actions –like supporting the fraudulent elector scheme –like supporting the fraudulent elector scheme or asking for a preemptive pardon– typically ran in district-level races and were not elected by a majority of voters in the entire state.

Nationwide: Insurrections Elected (% out of Insurrectionist Candidates)



Graph: Public Wise; Data: Public Wise Insurrection Index

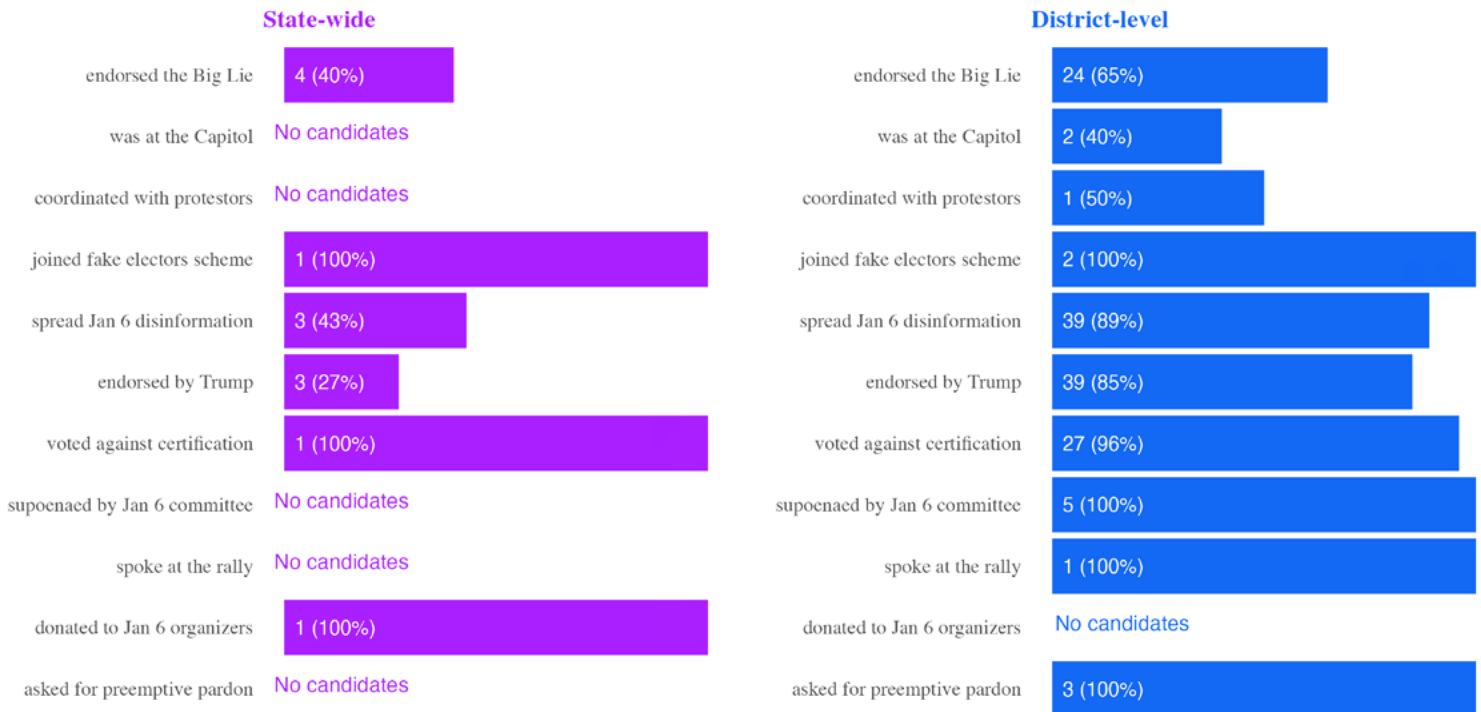
Of the four nationwide candidates who spoke at the rally, all four won their elections.

One such candidate is Representative Matt Maddock, who was re-elected to Michigan’s House of Representatives. While Maddock was elected by voters in his district and not the entire state, his re-election is consistent with Michigan State voters’ responses to our polling. Like registered voters in all of the other five battleground states we surveyed, when we asked voters in Michigan if an elected official who spoke at the rally on the mall before the events at the Capitol took place should or should not remain in office, the majority indicated that they should remain.

On the other hand, around two-thirds of voters in our battleground states said they would not vote for someone who had requested a preemptive pardon. Yet, the four incumbent candidates - three of which were in Public Wise’s priority states - who reportedly requested pardons won, but all four were running in district-level races. This suggests that voters in Marjorie Taylor Green’s district in Georgia, Andy Biggs’ district in Arizona and Scott Perry’s district in Pennsylvania did not vote in accordance with the popular opinion of the rest of the state.*

* The fourth incumbent who requested a pardon and ran for re-election is Matt Gaetz. We do not have data on support for candidates who requested a pardon from Florida voters.

Battleground States*: Insurrections Elected (% out of Insurrectionist Candidates)



Graph: Public Wise; Data: Public Wise Insurrection Index
 *Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania

Some other actions did seem more correlated with election losses. Our polling found that roughly half of registered voters in battleground states opposed candidates holding office if they “participated” in the events of January 6th.

In total, 57% (12) of the 21 candidates nationwide who were at the Capitol on January 6th lost their races.

In battleground states, the only state-wide candidate present at the Capitol on January 6th – Doug Mastriano for Governor of Pennsylvania – lost his election.

Another three out of five district-level candidates in our priority battleground states who had been present at the Capitol on the day of the insurrection lost their elections, including Sandy Smith from North Carolina’s 1st congressional district and J.R. Majewski from Ohio’s 9th district.

Finally, supporting the Big Lie was a losing proposition for candidates: Nationwide, 55% of insurrectionist candidates running for a state-wide office and 56% of those running for district-level offices who supported the Big Lie lost their elections.

In the battleground states we polled, 67% of statewide candidates who supported the Big Lie lost their elections. While our polling did not ask whether registered voters would vote for someone who supported the Big Lie, election losses of these insurrectionist candidates are consistent with the fact that the majority of voters told us they did not believe key aspects of this anti-democracy conspiracy.

Emerging Threats and the Future of U.S. Democracy

At Public Wise, we remain vigilant to persistent and emerging threats to our democratic system. More insurrectionist candidates won elected office than lost around the country.

Across the board, insurrectionist incumbents at the highest levels of government – in Congress and State Governors – held their seats, despite a majority spreading false information online, supporting the Big Lie, and voting against election certification.

That said, the victory of many pro-democracy candidates over insurrectionist and anti-democracy candidates in many key state-wide roles such as Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of State should bring some relief to those concerned with justice and accountability.

We continue to track candidates and elected officials who represent emerging threats to our democracy.

These individuals are those who have:

- (1) spread the Big Lie as a way to win elected office,
- (2) use violent rhetoric to encourage supporters,
- (3) were endorsed by former President Trump as a result of promoting false claims about the 2020 election,
- (4) use their platform to promote other insurrectionist candidates and/or
- (5) celebrate and praise the insurrection of January 6, 2021

61 candidates Public Wise is tracking in the Insurrection Index represent an emerging threat to our democracy.

Over half (56%) lost their midterm election races, including Kari Lake who lost her bid for Governor of Arizona, Tudor Dixon for Governor of Michigan, and Doug Mastriano for Governor of Pennsylvania.

However, 27 emerging threat candidates were elected to office across 17 states, including 12 to high profile offices such as the U.S. Senate, Governor, Attorney General, or Secretary of State.

For example, David Farnsworth was elected State Senator of Arizona, Diego Morales to Secretary of State in Indiana and J.D. Vance was elected to the U.S. Senate in Ohio, despite all three having supported the Big Lie of election fraud and spreading disinformation online.

It is worth noting that while January 6th was one of the most violent and visible acts against our democracy, it is actually the continuation of decades of hostility toward democracy, not the beginning of it.

As an example, the Supreme Court's dismantling of the Voting Rights Act in *Shelby v. Holder* paved the way for many states to enact new voter suppression legislation even before the wave of voter suppression bills following the 2020 election.

Likewise, as a result of a campaign to take over state legislatures around the country, Republicans controlled the 2010 redistricting process in several states, allowing them to gerrymander congressional maps in their favor and undermine voters' preferences in key battleground states for much of the last decade. 7-10 of the 16-17 seat Republican U.S. House advantage following the 2010 redistricting cycle came from three of our key battleground states alone: Michigan, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania.

While the 2020 redistricting cycle was marked by fairer maps, largely due to litigation against states that engaged in extreme gerrymandering, gerrymandering did not disappear and it is almost certain that it can at least partially explain the higher success of insurrectionist candidates running for positions that are not elected on a state-wide basis, namely in the United States House of Representatives.

Moreover, two years out from the events of January 6th, new threats to democracy lie on the horizon. Receiving a Trump endorsement or lionizing the attack on the Capitol – elements of what we consider emerging threats – can indeed be taken as clear signals of anti-democratic attitudes, but they are not the only forms.

While receiving a Trump endorsement was associated with wins for district-level candidates (Trump-endorsed district-level candidates won 91% of their seats), it was not much of an asset for state-level candidates (who won just 52% of their seats). If Trump no longer serves the needs of candidates who are nevertheless in favor of subverting democracy, we must expect that they will find other ways to signal these attitudes than holding up the mantle of Trump and January 6th.

Indeed, as Trump's political brand has grown more toxic, new anti-democracy factions are emerging which are unallied with Trump, especially among high profile candidates running at the state level.

In Florida, Governor Ron DeSantis is actively hostile to President Trump but has engaged in a number of undemocratic actions, such as ousting an elected state attorney and passing legislation that effectively bans any discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity from public schools, among a long list of other behaviors that are troubling in a democracy.

Though Georgia governor Brian Kemp made an enemy out of Trump by refusing to overturn Biden's 2020 win in his state, he went on to pass a sweeping bill that introduced new voting restrictions. The bill was supported by other Georgia Republicans who upheld Biden's win in the 2020 election as well, including Secretary of State Brad Raffensberger, who also won reelection.

The history of the United States includes a long record of public officials and candidates exhibiting hostility to democracy under the banner of various movements. This hostility has garnered support from certain segments of the American people since well before January 6th, 2021, and will continue to do so in its wake, even as the forms it takes continue to shift and evolve.

The many candidates who were directly involved in the attempted subversion of the previous election and who advanced into office now hold power over crucial levels of government at local, state, and national levels.

These election outcomes are a result not only of former President Trump or January 6th, but of a much deeper movement grounded in hostility toward democracy which has only continued to grow over the last several decades.

The next two years must see democracy's defenders holding the line for a just electoral system and advance a bold pro-democracy agenda so that in the next election, when democracy will surely be on the ballot once again, voters are equipped with the knowledge and resources they need to make the right call.

Along with so many other collective efforts, Public Wise intends to play an essential part.