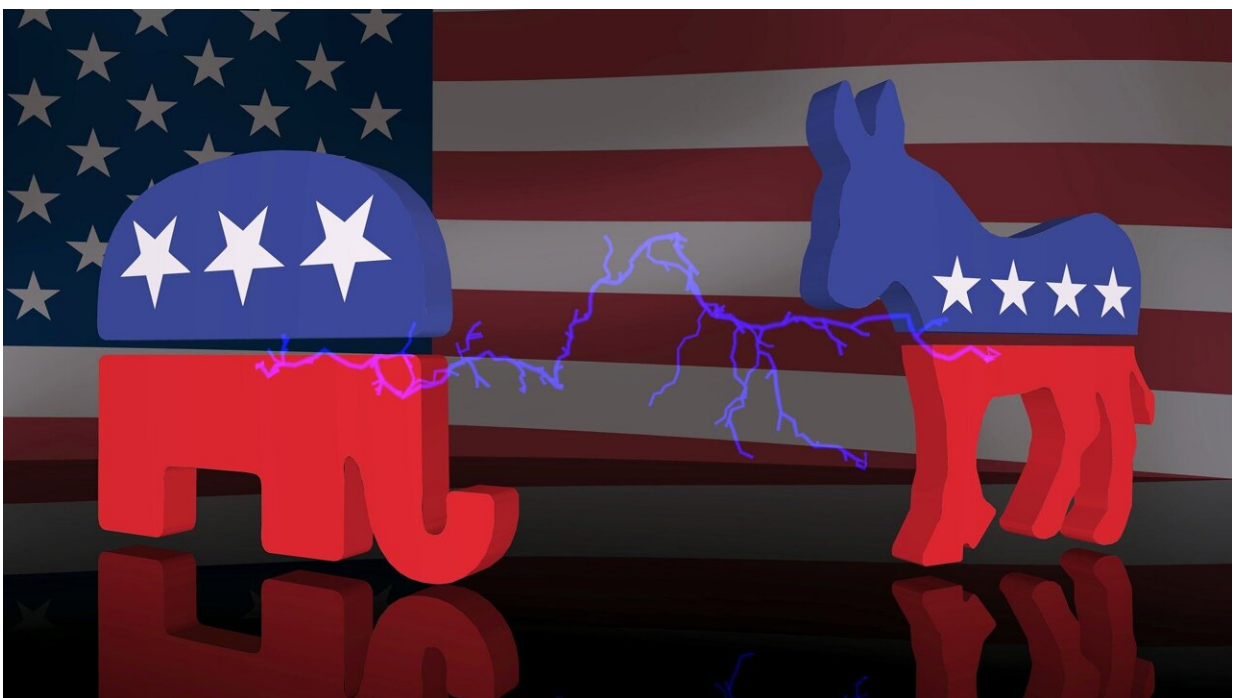


Report shines light on what US midterm election results could mean for future of American politics

February 27 2023



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

What the United States midterm election results revealed about the current state of democracy in the country —and the challenges that might lie ahead for both major parties—is examined in a new report led by a politics expert from London's Kingston University.

Academics from institutions across the United Kingdom, United States and the Republic of Ireland have contributed to the Exploring the 2022 US Midterms briefing paper, recently published by the American Politics Group of the Political Studies Association. The report is designed to act as a bridge between journalistic coverage of the 2022 midterms and longer-term peer-reviewed academic studies, with an accompanying podcast in which the academics outline some of their findings.

Compiled and co-authored by senior lecturer in politics Dr. Peter Finn from Kingston University, it covers key talking points from the November elections, which saw the Republicans take control of the House of Representatives, albeit with a slim majority, while the Democrats defied expectations to retain control of the Senate.

The report explores how voters prioritized issues such as inflation and reproductive rights as well as providing insights into challenges and opportunities for both parties in the run up to the 2024 [presidential elections](#).

One of the encouraging signs for democracy from the midterms was that, in a number of swing seats, candidates who maintained the presidential election was stolen failed to win, Dr. Finn said. "Following the threat to democracy America faced in 2021, the 2022 midterms could be seen as a return to some form of normality," he said. "Former President Donald Trump wasn't on the ballot and there wasn't the blanket wall-to-wall media coverage we witnessed during the 2018 midterms."

"What's fascinating though is what the results tell us about the state of both parties, with the expected Republican red wave failing to materialize and the mixed picture that emerged across the country on how influential concerns about the economy and abortion were."

"From a Democratic perspective, the low approval rating for President Joe Biden, combined with losing the House of Representatives and his advancing age, make the prospect of him leading his party into the 2024 presidential campaign far from certain."

Many of the big names dominating the US political arena feature throughout the report, which evaluates the prospects of the next generation of potential presidential candidates. With Florida Governor Ron DeSantis's strong performance boosting his profile, a chapter by Kingston University Ph.D. student Felicia Ronnholm examines how climate change was framed by Republicans in the Florida debates—an approach that could signal the future direction of the party at a national level.

Setting out how DeSantis tended to avoid using the term [climate change](#) and only addressed resilience when speaking of hurricanes in the state, she outlined how he would be unlikely to prioritize climate mitigation policies, in contrast to the Democrats' position.

Elsewhere, the prospects of the various likely Democrat runners should Biden decide not to stand in 2024 are considered. They include Vice President Kamala Harris as well as emerging alternatives, including Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Transport Secretary Pete Buttigieg.

Meanwhile, analysis of the performance of moderate Republicans in the north eastern states found they remained competitive—particularly where candidates received support from national Republicans. Despite this, a chapter exploring whether the party was ready to move on from Trump suggested that even if it did, it was likely to coalesce around a candidate from the same wing.

"It's probably too early to say that we're at the end of the Trump era,"

Dr. Finn said. "However the difficulty Kevin McCarthy had in getting the votes to become speaker of the House tells us a lot about the power different factions of the Republican party hold."

"Both chambers are incredibly tight, so whichever side can maintain some form of party discipline during the next two years has the opportunity to either make things happen or block the other's agenda."

More information: Paper: [ukpsaapg.co.uk/wp-content/uplo ... -APG-Brief-Final.pdf](https://ukpsaapg.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/APG-Brief-Final.pdf)

Provided by Kingston University, London

Citation: Report shines light on what US midterm election results could mean for future of American politics (2023, February 27) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-02-midterm-election-results-future-american.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.