

President's Newsletter



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Office of the President
United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO
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CITIZENSHIP PARTICIPATION DEPARTMENT

Major UFW Election Effort Produces Victories, Defeats

A major statewide drive to elect UFW-backed candidates in the November 7 election campaign resulted in many victories and some defeats, election results revealed.

In a dramatic victory for the farm workers, California voters reelected Democratic Gov. *Jerry Brown* with the largest landslide vote in 30 years of state politics. At the same time, voters also rejected the reelection candidacy of Lt. Gov. *Mervyn Dymally* and Democratic Congresswoman *Yvonne Brathwaite Burke's* bid to become state attorney general. *Dymally* and *Burke*, who are both Black, are longtime UFW supporters.

Gov. *Brown's* reelection was crucial to the union's efforts to assure continued progress for farm workers under California's historic Agricultural Labor Relations Act, passed with the governor's help in 1975. Gov. *Brown's* Republican Party opponent, state Attorney General *Evelle Younger*, almost certainly would have backed the growers in attempting to weaken or destroy the law.

Final statewide election figures gave the 40 year old governor a 56% to 36% victory with 3,935,205 votes to *Younger's* 2,490,796.

But the news was not as good in other state constitutional races. *Dymally* was defeated by millionaire record producer Republican *Mike Curb*. *Dymally* received 43% of the vote or 2,895,304 votes to *Curb's* 52% or 3,447,221 votes.

Burke lost to conservative state Senator *George Deukmejian*. She received 43% of the vote or 2,889,648 votes to *Deukmejian's* 53% or 3,510,128 votes.

Burke, Dymally Defeats

Burke's and *Dymally's* losses were real disappointments to the UFW and the entire labor movement. Both candidates were staunch defenders of the farm workers and other working men and women. Although *Curb* is relatively unknown in state politics, *Deukmejian's* record as a state senator is one of opposition to farm workers, labor and consumer interests.

Gov. *Brown's* strategists had hoped that a wide margin of victory for the governor would have a coattail effect on the candidacies of *Dymally* and *Burke*—that the rest of the Democratic ticket would be pulled to victory with Gov. *Brown*. But that was not to be the case.

UFW-endorsed State Treasurer *Jess Unruh*, a Democrat, easily won reelection against Republican *Don French* by a lopsided 59% to 35% margin.

In another statewide election, California Supreme Court Chief Justice *Rose Bird* overcame a campaign by conservative and agribusiness interests to win confirmation of her appointment by Gov. *Brown* to the state high court. Newly appointed members of the Supreme Court must be confirmed by the voters. Many growers, objecting to *Bird's* role in enacting the ALRA when she was head of the state Food and Agriculture Agency, opposed her confirmation.

Bird received 52% of the vote or 3,113,940 yes votes to 48% or 2,903,834 no votes.

2,000 Volunteers Statewide

The *Brown* campaign in Spanish-speaking communities was directed by UFW National Executive Board Member *Marshall Ganz*, who took a leave of absence from his union duties to work for the governor. Assisting Brother *Ganz* and coordinating activities on the eastside of Los Angeles was National Executive Board member *Jessica Govea*, who also took a leave of absence.

In all, 2,000 volunteers were recruited to help get-out-the-vote for Gov. *Brown* on election day. They covered 1,000 precincts throughout California.



Photo by Susan Schumacher

Gov. *Brown* addressed the UFW's Political Endorsement Conference on July 30 in San Jose and asked the farm workers for their support.

Close to 1,000 people took off Tuesday, November 7 to help reelect Gov. *Brown* in East Los Angeles. They included 20 full time campaign workers and 60 UFW staff who helped out the last five days of the campaign from La Paz, Coachella, Calexico, Oxnard and Santa Maria. As a result of their hard work, voter turnout in East Los Angeles was 86% compared to 70% statewide, the largest turnout since the late Senator *Robert F. Kennedy* ran in the California primary in 1968.

Election time get-out-the-vote activities capped a massive canvassing and voter registration campaign that began last August.

By October 9, the cutoff date for registering to vote for the November 7 election, 53,000 new voters—most of them Democrats and Spanish speaking—had been registered in East Los Angeles (see Newsletter, October 30, 1978).

After the voter registration was complete, campaign volunteers began canvassing in the Chicano neighborhoods, walking door-to-door to talk to registered voters and urge them to support Gov. *Brown's* reelection. They were aided by computer printed lists of Spanish speaking voters in eastside neighborhoods.

The canvassing produced volunteers in each precinct who helped phone their neighbors, check the polls on election day to see who had not yet voted and visit voters to get them to the polls. Out of 440 precincts on the eastside of Los Angeles, 100 were called through by 120 volunteers who did phoning on election day.

Get-Out-The-Vote

On the night before election day, we visited the East Los Angeles *Brown* headquarters and addressed a rally with several hundred campaign volunteers who packed the office, most of them recruited from the local community for work on get-out-the-vote.

Every two years we meet good dedicated people during the election campaigns, we said. Their work was important because in getting their friends and neighbors out to vote for Gov. *Brown* and other politicians dedicated to serving the interests of poor and minority people, they not only help themselves, but they work for the future of their community.

On Wednesday, November 8, Gov. *Brown* visited the East Los Angeles headquarters to personally thank many of the volunteers for their work. About 300 campaign workers gathered for a post election reception. It was the first place the governor went to say "thank you" to people who served in his campaign.

Brother *Ganz* supervised three other operations in the state.

San Jose *Brown* volunteers spread out in Spanish speaking communities covering three assembly districts. About 280 volunteers helped get-out-

the-vote on election day in over 100 voter precincts.

In San Diego, *Brown* volunteers worked with Chicano and Black voters in two assembly districts. Again, 280 volunteers worked in 100 precincts.

In Oakland, 500 *Brown* campaign volunteers talked to Black and Chicano voters in 270 precincts in a massive get-out-the-vote effort.

Other Races

In general, farm worker-backed candidates for the U.S. Congress and the state Assembly and Senate did well. They included candidates endorsed by the UFW's Second Political Endorsement Conference last July 30 in San Jose and by action of the National Executive Board.

Of 21 UFW-endorsed candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives (the lower house of Congress), 17 won election or reelection.

The union backed eight candidates for state Senate and six of them emerged victorious. And the farm workers endorsed 34 candidates for the state Assembly; 22 were chosen by the voters.

One disappointment occurred in Kern County where Democrat *Bob Sogge* lost the 18th Congressional District seat left vacant earlier this year with the death of Republican Congressman *Bill Ketchum*. *Sogge* was soundly defeated by Republican Assemblyman *Bill Thomas*. Final results were disappointing with *Thomas* receiving 59% or 84,437 votes to *Sogge's* 41% or 58,245 votes.

From October 5 to 9, the farm workers conducted a massive voter registration campaign in Kern and parts of Tulare Counties. Over 6,000 new voters were registered (4,718 Democrats) and most of them were members of minority groups. Dozens of farm workers' union members and supporters walked precincts for *Sogge* and helped get-out-the-vote for the Democratic candidate.

Republican *Thomas* ran on an anti-UFW and anti-Mexican platform. His television ads featured *Thomas* telling voters how he opposes "*Cesar Chavez* and the farm workers' union and illegal aliens receiving welfare."

UFW-endorsed Congressional candidates who won were *Robert Matsui* (Democrat, Sacramento), Assemblyman *Vic Fazio* (Democrat, Yolo, Sacramento, Solano Counties), Congressman *John Burton* (Democrat, San Francisco), Congressman *Philip Burton* (Democrat, San Francisco), Congressman *George Miller* (Democrat, Contra Costa County), Congressman *Fortney Stark* (Democrat, Alameda and Contra Coast Counties), and Congressman *Don Edwards* (Democrat, Alameda and Santa Clara Counties).

Although in general union-supported state Senate candidates did well, we were disappointed with the defeat of Senator *John Dunlap*, coauthor of the Farm Labor law who supported the farm workers during the Proposition 14 campaign in 1976. *Dunlap* was defeated in his bid for reelection to his Napa, Sacramento, Solano, Sonoma Counties district by grower-backed Republican pesticide salesman *James W. Neilsen*.

The union also backed Assemblyman *Joe Montoya*, who was elected to the state Senate in a district that includes Monterey Park, El Monte and La Puente on the eastside of Los Angeles. *Montoya* will be the third Chicano in the state Senate.

Other state Senate candidates endorsed by the UFW who were victorious were Senator *Alan Robbins* (Democrat, San Fernando Valley), Senator *Alan Sieroty* (Democrat, West Los Angeles), Senator *Alex Garcia* (Democrat, East Los Angeles), Senator-elect *Diane Watson* (Democrat, South Central Los Angeles), and Senator *James Mills* (Democrat, San Diego).

A real victory for the farm workers was the reelection of San Diego Assemblyman *Larry Kapiloff*, a Democrat who emerged victorious in a difficult battle with his Republican opponent. The farm workers in San Diego County worked hard to help get-out-the-vote for *Kapiloff* during the last days of the campaign.

Alatorre, Torres Easily Reelected

Two of the union's strongest supporters in the legislature were reelection by huge margins. Assemblyman

Richard Alatorre overcame a campaign by Republican *John Feliz*, a Los Angeles City police officer who has received money from grower groups. Brother *Alatorre* was reelected in his Northeast Los Angeles district 60% to 40%. He was a coauthor of the farm labor law.

And Assemblyman *Art Torres*, the first UFW member to be elected to public office, scored an 81% to 19% landslide victory against his Republican opponent. *Torres*, who represents the heart of the East Los Angeles barrio in Sacramento, was the UFW's legislative director in 1972 and 1973.

Other union-endorsed Assembly candidates who won their races are Assemblyman *Tom Bates* (Democrat, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties), Assemblyman *Bill Lockyer* (Democrat, Alameda County), Assemblyman *Art Agnos* (Democrat, San Francisco), Assemblyman *Willie Brown* (Democrat, San Francisco), Assembly Speaker *Leo McCarthy* (Democrat, San Francisco and San Mateo Counties), Assemblyman and Majority Leader *Howard Derman* (Democrat, West Los Angeles), Assemblyman *Mel Levine* (Democrat, Santa Monica), Assemblyman *Herschel Rosenthal* (Democrat, Los Angeles), Assemblyman *Michael Roos* (Democrat, Wilshire District, Silver Lake), Assemblywoman *Teresa Hughes* (Democrat, Huntington Park), Assemblyman *Curtis Tucker* (Democrat, Inglewood), Assemblyman *Vincent Thomas* (Democrat, San Pedro), *Sally Tanner* (Democrat, El Monte, La Puente), Assemblyman *Bruce Young* (Democrat, Norwalk), Assemblyman *Dennis Mangers* (Democrat, Orange County), Assemblyman *Peter Chacon* (Democrat, San Diego), Assemblyman *John Vasconcello* (Democrat, San Jose), Assemblywoman *Leona Egeland* (Democrat, Santa Clara County), and Assemblyman *Gary Hart* (Democrat, Santa Barbara).

All 80 Assembly seats are up before the voters every two years. Democrats continued to hold a wide majority of seats in both the state Senate and Assembly.

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Address Correction Requested

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