

Ohio Governors' Elections Analysis

There have been sixty six elections for Governor in Ohio since the beginning of the current two party system in 1855. From 1855 until 1958 Governors were elected every two years. Since 1958 they have been elected every four years. Candidates for Lt. Governor and Governor ran separately until 1978.

Of the sixty six elections Republican candidates have won 39 elections and Democrats 27.

Jim Rhodes (R) served the most years in the Governor's office (16) and Rhodes and Frank Lausche (D) ran the most times (6). Rhodes won four of his six elections and Lausche won five times. All of Lausche's elections were for two year terms. Rhodes lost to Lausche in 1954.

George V. Voinovich (R) had the highest percent of the vote (71.77% in 1994) in the sixty six elections. John Kasich (R) received the second highest percent (63.64% in 2014). Ted Strickland (D) received the most raw votes (2,435,384 in 2006). No candidate for Governor won all 88 counties. Rhodes won 87 counties in 1966. Kasich (2014), Voinovich (1994) and republican John Bricker (1942) won 86 counties.

Six of the sixty six elections were decided by one percent or less. The closest was in 1873 when William Allen (D) won by .18%. The second closest was in 1974 when Jim Rhodes (R) won by .37%. The other elections that were decided by one percent or less was 1857, 1867, 1875 and 1916.

Twenty two of the sixty six elections were decided by 10 points or more. George V. Voinovich (R) won by the highest percentage variance +46.79% in 1994. John Kasich won by the second highest amount, +30.61 in 2014. Jim Rhodes (R) received the third highest percentage variance, +24.36% in 1966.

Since Ohio switched to four year terms in 1958 Republicans have won ten elections and Democrats five elections. Since switching to four year terms only one Democrat has been reelected, Richard Celeste (D) in 1986. Every republican since 1958 has been reelected. Jim Rhodes (R) was reelected twice, while George V. Voinovich (R), Bob Taft (R) and John Kasich were all reelected. Republicans have won seven of the last 10 Governors elections.

Since switching to four year terms in 1958 eleven of the 15 elections have been won by more than 10 percentage points. Six of the 15 elections were decided by 20 points or more. The closest race since 1958 was in 1974 when Jim Rhodes (R) defeated incumbent John Gilligan (D) by 11,488 votes or .37%. Rhodes was also involved in the second closest race since 1958 beating Richard Celeste (D) by 1.67% in 1978.