

See how Plaquemines Parish voters voted in the November 3rd election



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Plaquemines Parish Votes Republican Across the Ballot, DA Race Heads to a Runoff

By Justin Walton
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Even with COVID-19 restrictions and power outages caused by Hurricane Zeta, the 2020 election held on Tuesday, November 3 went by without complications in Plaquemines. While a good portion of votes were accounted for through mail-in ballots or early voting, Plaquemines residents who wished to wait until Election Day were able to vote on Tuesday.

In the highly anticipated presidential race, Plaquemines overwhelmingly supported Republican incumbent Donald Trump, giving him 67% of the vote. Democratic challenger Joe Biden got only 31%. Though Trump was able to beat out Biden for LA's 8 electoral votes, overall, the state was nowhere close to matching Plaquemines' enthusiasm for the current president. State-wide, Trump overcame Biden 58% to 40% respectively. The results from the national election are still waiting on mail-in ballots to be counted in key battleground states.

Other statewide/ multi parish elections saw Plaquemines either mirror or supersede LA's red bend. Those were the races for U.S. Representative -- 1st Congressional District, Public Service Commissioner -- District 1, and U.S. Senator.

For Senator, Plaquemines favored another Republican incumbent in "Bill" Cassidy, with him getting a blowout 68% of the votes (compared to 59% statewide). Steve Scalise—yet another Republican incumbent for U.S. Representative—got 71% of the votes in Plaquemines and 72% of the total votes from the 8 parishes that voted, easily surmounting

DISTRICT ATTORNEY CANDIDATES HEADED TO DEC. 5 RUNOFF



Charles Ballay



Leo Palazzo

the 50% threshold needed to avoid a runoff.

For PSC - District 1 Plaquemines favored, again, Republican incumbent Eric Skrmetta. But due to the fact that, including Skrmetta, there were 4 Republicans splitting the Republican vote, he was able to get 35% of the votes in Plaquemines. Democratic challenger Allen Borne Jr. (the only Democrat in the race) was 2nd with 26%. This result is very similar to the outcome from the 11 parishes that voted for PSC - District 1. Overall, Skrmetta won 31% of the votes while Borne got just 25%. This general underperformance by the incumbent—whatever the reasons—kept Skrmetta from securing 50% of the vote, sending him and Borne into a runoff.

In the race for District Attorney - 25th Judicial District Court, no final decision was made by the voters of Plaquemines on November 3. Each candidate— Gibby Andry, Charles Ballay, Leo Palazzo, Terry Sercovich (all Republicans)—had a respectable

showing on Election Day. The Incumbent Ballay, who got 35% of the vote, will be facing Palazzo, who got 28%, in the runoff. Andry gathered 23% of the vote, sliding into third right behind Palazzo, and Sercovich fell to last with 15% of the vote going his way.

While Ballay had the most votes of a single candidate, approximately 65% of those who voted on November 3 voted for one of his challengers. The runoff will be a new election with a different dynamic (Ballay vs. Palazzo instead of Ballay vs. three challengers), but if November 3 is any indication of how Plaquemines voters are feeling about the current DA, Ballay might be in trouble.

But the incumbent didn't see it that way.

"With the amount of [candidates] in this race, we knew there'd be a run off. Obviously, you hope you can win outright, but I feel good about our position," Ballay said of the results. "Besides, it won't be three challengers attacking me anymore; it's me and [Palazzo], one

one. It's a different game."

"The people of Plaquemines trust me, they know I'm fair, have a high success rate on criminal prosecutions, and that we have programs for first time offenders or [people that just need our help]," Ballay concluded.

Waiting for him in the runoff, however, is Palazzo, who believes he sits in a much more advantageous position than Ballay.

"When an incumbent gets only 35% of the vote, it's a statement by the people that they want change. And that's what my campaign is all about," Palazzo said. "Now, I'm not going to count my chickens before they hatch, I'm going to keep working hard for Plaquemines' vote, and once I'm in the DA's office, I'll continue to work hard. Everyone knows I have an incredible work ethic."

"[Ballay] is not doing his job. The people are smart, they know this, and they know I'll change things once I [become

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Sharon Branan Appointed as New Registrar of Voters

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Plaquemines Parish has a new Registrar of Voters. With Kathleen Ketnor retired from her position as Registrar of Voters in Plaquemines, the Plaquemines Parish Council appointed Sharon Branan as the new Registrar of Voters after publicly "interviewing" five other applicants at a "Special Council Meeting" on Wednesday, November 4.

"This is the first time we've ever done it like this," district 5 council member Benny Roussele said. "In the past, the [parish] president would bring us a nominee and we'd just approve his choice."

But a new state law now requires the council to publicly advertise the available position, interview applicants, and then appoint a "Registrar of Voters" based on applicant qualifications. If the council had been unable to appoint a Registrar before 2021 (for any reason) then the Louisiana State Board of Election Supervisors would have appointed a Registrar on behalf of the par-

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Louisiana Guard continues to provide operations support after Zeta



Louisiana National Guardsmen of the 159th Fighter Wing help clear roads of debris in Belle Chasse, following Hurricane Zeta, Oct. 31.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Phuong Au

By LANG Public Affairs Office

The Louisiana National Guard currently has over 1,260 soldiers and airmen providing assistance across the state to operations including COVID-19, Hurricanes Laura, Delta and most recently Zeta.

Following initial rescue operations once a storm passes, the LANG focuses on recovery operations including engineer support, road clearance, and the set up and operation of Points of Distribution sites (PODs).

Currently, the LANG is operating two PODs, one in Braithwaite and one in Grand Isle, which provides a central location for citizens to pick up meals, water, ice and tarps.

In Grand Isle, the first to feel the strength of the high winds and water surge from Zeta, Mayor David Camardelle says his dad told him at an early age that the Louisiana National Guard will always be there to help the people until they are no longer needed.

"The people down here are always so excited to see the National Guard because they know help has arrived," said Camardelle. "It makes me emotional and relieved when I see the Guard trucks coming onto the island after any storm, and it makes me emotional when they leave because I know we are on the road to recovery."

To date, the LANG has distributed over 21,570 meals, 48,935 liters of water, 20,315 bags of ice, and 25,350 tarps to citizens affected by Hurricane Zeta.

"We bring the supplies to them, so they don't have to drive out," said Master Sgt. Tom Gates, an aircraft mechanic with the 159th Fighter Wing, who mentioned that the near-

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MAILING INFO HERE

Woodlands Conservancy Partners with Chevron Oronite Oak Point on Virtual Education Series

Woodlands Conservancy has partnered with Chevron Oronite Oak Point to expand a virtual educational self-directed platform, COVID - Resources, that aims to keep communities informed of environmental educational activities during the pandemic. Woodlands Conservancy is producing a series of 16 new sessions called Wetland Wednesdays that airs on Facebook weekly at 9 a.m. now through the first week of January. Chevron Oronite is also supporting the design and production of a new Woodlands Trail map brochure and an Upland Trail Interpretive



Katie Brasted, Woodlands Conservancy Executive Director hold a check from Chevron Oronite that represents funding provided to Woodlands Conservancy to implement Covid-Resources including a Virtual Education Series.

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