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2018 VOTERS FIRST: NH AT THE POLLS

Midterms draw big crowds in NH

CONGRESS, 1ST DISTRICT

Edwards, Pappas too close to call

By PAUL FEELY
New Hampshire Union Leader

MANCHESTER — Voters in New Hampshire's 1st Congressional District were set to make history — electing either the state's first openly gay congressman or a black person to high office — but late Tuesday night the race remained to close to call.



EDDIE EDWARDS **CHRIS PAPPAS**

Neither Manchester Democrat Chris Pappas or Republican Eddie Edwards of Dover were ready to claim victory or concede as of 10 p.m.

Unofficial results at 10 p.m. showed Pappas with 50 percent of the vote to Edwards' 48 percent, with 40 percent of the district reporting. Libertarian and past candidate Dan Belforti of Portsmouth had just under 2 percent of the vote.

The winner will head to Washington to fill the 1st Congressional District seat being vacated by Carol Shea-Porter, who is retiring. By 10 p.m., Pappas had yet to address supporters at his campaign party at the Puritan Backroom Conference Center.

Edwards greeted supporters at the DoubleTree by Hilton Manchester Down-

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THOMAS ROY/UNION LEADER

A smiling Gov. Chris Sununu shows a photo of his cat to 5-year-old Catherine Cruess of Bedford, who attended Sununu's election night party at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Manchester with her dad, Dylan.

GOVERNOR

Sununu captures second term

By DAVE SOLOMON
New Hampshire Union Leader

MANCHESTER — Arriving to chants of "two more years," a buoyant Gov. Chris Sununu was braced to declare victory just after 10 p.m. on election night, following unofficial reports of a concession by his Democratic rival Molly Kelly.

Sununu arrived at his election night party early on Tuesday, optimistic about the outcome, and for good reason. He was leading Kelly, a former state senator, 52 to 45 percent with 43 percent of the vote counted.

"It's going to be a great night ... a great night for Republicans," he said as he greeted supporters filling the room at the Double Tree by Hilton in downtown Manchester.

Sununu worked the room for most of the evening, remaining upbeat despite early returns from liberal strongholds in the state like Keene and Portsmouth that showed his Democratic opponent, former state Senator Molly Kelly, with strong numbers.

Kelly beat Sununu 57-41 percent in Concord; 63-28 percent in Keene; 68-30 percent in Lebanon; 65-34 percent in Portsmouth; and 61-37 percent in Dover.

But Sununu won Manchester, 19,177 to 17,074, which did not bode well for Kelly, since no Democrat has been elected governor without winning Manchester.

Sununu also beat Kelly

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Turnout headed for a record Manchester's 63% was the highest of any midterm

By KEVIN LANDRIGAN
New Hampshire Union Leader

The driving rain failed to dampen determined Granite State voters who, experts said, would likely set a record for midterm turnout in Tuesday's election.

Secretary of State Bill Gardner visited polls across the state, confident of his forecast that this would be the first midterm where more than 500,000 voters cast ballots.

Before the election, Gardner settled on a forecast of 540,000.

"It's been raining voters all day," Gardner said. "Despite the weather the turnout has been terrific all over the state."

Gov. Chris Sununu, who faced a stiff

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New citizens, new voters



THOMAS ROY/UNION LEADER

Voting for the first time in America on Tuesday were Manchester brothers, from left, Chuda, Hari and Tilak Niroula. The former refugees from Bhutan, a Buddhist kingdom that borders Tibet, voted in Ward 9 at Bishop Leo O'Neil Youth Center in Manchester.



Governor

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by margins of 60 percent or better in smaller communities throughout the state, like Hillsborough, Hampton Falls, Moultonborough and Newport.

In the Monadnock region, where Kelly needed a strong showing, Sununu won Jaffrey 52-47 percent and Rindge, 62-36 percent.

One thing that became apparent as early results rolled in is that this election for governor will turn out to be much closer than earlier polls suggested.

With low unemployment and a large state budget surplus, the first-term governor ran on a record of widespread prosperity, deregulation and effective management. He man-

aged to effectively navigate a middle ground in his relationship with President Trump, distancing himself from policies like family separation at the border while siding with the president on tax cuts.

Kelly did not aggressively tie Sununu to Trump until late in the campaign.

Priscilla Mills of Manchester, a young woman who works in health care, said she was hoping for a Sununu victory, "Because I like what he stands for," she said. "I like what he's doing, especially the expanded nursing program and the drug recovery program for teens and adolescents at the Sununu Center."

Kelly supporters at the

campaign's election night party at the Puritan Backroom Conference Center in Manchester said they were feeling good about their candidate's chances as polls closed across the state.

"I like what I have heard from her," said Dan Bongiorno of Hudson. "I think she'll be a strong voice for education, which is important to me. I think we need someone new in Concord."

"I was impressed that she wouldn't take any corporate funding for her campaign," said Sheila Lewis of Derry. "Her support of public education is important to me also. I think she really started to surge the last few days. I feel good about tonight."