

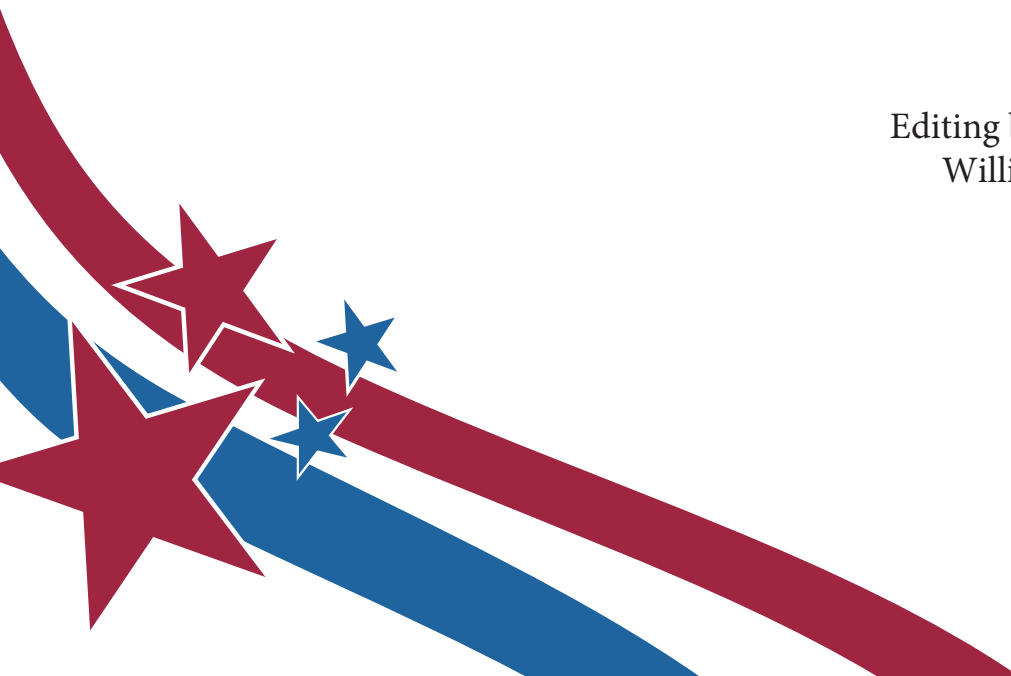
*An Analysis of 2020 Election
Results in New Jersey's
2nd Congressional District*

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INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey 2nd Congressional District is made up of a mixture of urban and rural areas with suburban areas becoming the key factor in who wins an election in the district. The 2nd Congressional District has been considered a swing district that has elected both Democrats and Republicans to office. In the 2016 election, many of the district's counties that had voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012 pivoted to vote for Trump in 2016. The 2nd District has long been said to lean Republican, and the 2020 election showed the GOP was still dominant within the district as in 2016. All the counties within the district voted along the same party lines as in the 2016 presidential election. The district's highest-profile race for the congressional seat between Republican Jeff Van Drew and Democrat Amy Kennedy was the least competitive of the district's three federal elections, with Van Drew winning municipalities that had previously voted Republican and municipalities that had voted for him in the previous election cycle as a Democrat. Van Drew also garnered the largest number of votes of any candidate within the 2nd District. Republican Donald Trump won the 2nd District, as he did in 2016. The race for the U.S. Senate seat was the closest between the three federal races with two percentage points separating the two main candidates. This election's results give an indication of the direction in which the New Jersey 2nd Congressional District is headed regarding voting patterns and party alignments within counties and municipalities.

PRESIDENT

The Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump, won New Jersey's 2nd Congressional District by three percentage points (Trump 51%- Biden 48%,) and in a vote of 193,906 to 183,151, according to this analysis. The Democratic candidate, Joe Biden, was able to chip away at Trump's five percentage-points winning margin from 2016 against the previous Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton. Trump kept the same vote share in the district as the 2016 election, while Biden was able to increase the Democratic vote share by two percentage

points. While county winners fell along the same party lines from the 2016 presidential election, during this election Trump saw decreases in all winning margins at the county level from 2016 to 2020 except for Burlington, which is an extremely small portion of the district. Trump lost 8 points off his win margin from 2016 (31 points to 23 points) in Ocean County, followed by Cape May and Gloucester County with a four-point decrease. Biden kept the same winning margins that Hillary Clinton won in 2016 for both Cumberland and Atlantic County. In terms of vote share, Trump remained within one point of his 2016 percentages at the county level, except in Ocean County where Trump, again, saw the largest decrease of three percentage points from his vote share. The Democratic vote share increased from the 2016 election in all counties, except Burlington where it remained at 30 percent. However, despite these gains, Biden still held the same winning margin that Hillary Clinton won in Atlantic and Cumberland counties since Trump's vote share also increased slightly from the 2016 election in those counties.

Trump won most municipalities (72%) in the district whereas Biden had large winning margins in urban centers. In 29 of the municipalities that Trump won, he garnered over 60% of the vote share. Biden, on the other hand, won 26 municipalities (28%) in the district with only eight of those municipalities gaining over 60% of the vote share. Biden, however, had the two largest winning margins within municipalities with a 70 percentage point margin in Pleasantville City and 61 percentage point winning margin in Salem City.

Biden was able to flip four municipalities within the district that voted Republican in 2016: Cape May City, East Greenwich Township, Somers Point City, and Woolwich Township. The largest change came from East Greenwich Township with Biden gaining 13 percentage points and Trump losing 10 percentage points. Somers Point City had the smallest change with Biden gaining three percentage points. East Greenwich Township is also the only municipality in the 2nd Congressional District to vote Democrat in the presidential race but vote Republican in the Senatorial and Congressional races.

2020 Results for President in the 2nd Congressional District

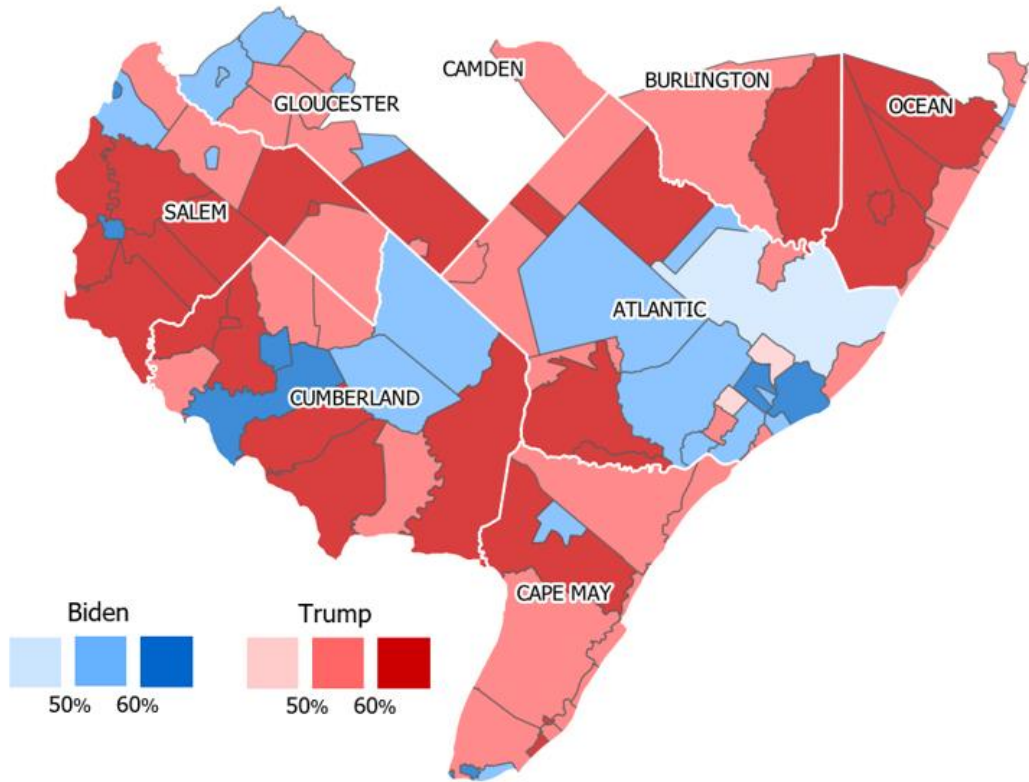


Figure 1. Municipality results of the 2020 election for President in New Jersey's 2nd congressional district, shown by the winning candidate's vote share.

Table 1.

County results of the 2020 election for President in New Jersey's 2nd congressional district.		
County	Biden	Trump
Atlantic	53%	46%
Burlington	30%	68%
Camden	41%	58%
Cape May	42%	57%
Cumberland	52%	46%
Gloucester	47%	52%
Ocean	38%	61%
Salem	43%	56%

Table 2.

Trump's five largest vote shares among municipalities within the 2nd Congressional District.	
Municipality	Vote Share
Lower Alloways Creek Twp.	79%
Bass River Twp.	74%
Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	72%
Downe Twp.	72%
Elsinboro Twp.	70%

Table 3.

Biden's five largest vote shares among municipalities within the 2nd Congressional District.	
Municipality	Vote Share
Pleasantville City	85%
Salem City	80%
Atlantic City	77%
Bridgeton City	76%
Penns Grove Boro	74%

Table 4.

Municipalities within the 2nd Congressional District that voted along different party lines in the 2016 and 2020 elections for President.

Municipality	County	Party Change from 2016 to 2020	Dem % Change	GOP % Change
Somers Point City	Atlantic	GOP to Dem	3%	0%
Cape May City	Cape May	GOP to Dem	7%	-5%
East Greenwich*	Gloucester	GOP to Dem	13%	-10%
Woolwich Twp.	Gloucester	GOP to Dem	4%	-2%

SENATE

The Republican Senatorial candidate, Rik Mehta, won the New Jersey 2nd Congressional District. Mehta beat the Democratic candidate, incumbent Sen. Cory Booker, by two percentage points in the district, 185,713 for Mehta to 17,955 for Booker. At the state level, however, Booker won reelection for the Senate seat by 16.3 percentage points. Despite Booker's statewide popularity, District 2 voting patterns did not reflect ticket splitting in which municipalities went Republican for Trump and Van Drew but then voted for Democrat Booker. On the district level, Booker's vote share was 7.2 percentage points lower than his statewide share of 57.2% of the vote, whereas Mehta had a larger vote share on the district level by 7.1 percentage points compared to his statewide performance. Biden and Booker had the same percentage of vote share in the district, while Trump had a one percentage point larger vote share than Mehta. Because of this, Trump's winning margin over Biden was one point larger than Mehta's win over Booker in the district, despite Biden and Booker having performed the same at the district level.

The senatorial race saw the counties vote along the same party lines as the presidential race. The senatorial and presidential Democratic candidates had the same vote share in Atlantic County while Booker had a one percentage point higher vote share than Biden in Cumberland County. Booker, an incumbent first elected in 2013, had a larger winning margin than Biden in both counties: Atlantic County with one percentage point higher and Cumberland County with three percentage points more.

Mehta underperformed Trump in most of the district. In all but three counties—Cape May, Gloucester, and Ocean—Trump had a larger vote share than Mehta. In Cape May and Gloucester County, Mehta and Trump had the same vote share, while in Ocean County Mehta had a larger vote share by one percentage point. In the majority of the counties, Trump also had larger winning margins than Mehta with the largest being a three-point difference in their

winning margins in both Burlington and Salem County. Mehta had a larger winning margin in two counties: Gloucester and Ocean. He had a one-point larger margin in Gloucester County and a two-point larger margin in Ocean.

Mehta won the majority of municipalities (72%) in the 2nd Congressional District, but Booker won most of his municipalities with a large winning margin. Booker held the three largest winning margins for the contest: 69 percentage point difference in Pleasantville City, 63 percentage point difference in Salem City, and 58 percentage point difference in Atlantic City. The smallest winning margin was also by Booker in Absecon City with a .17-percentage point difference. All of the Democratic candidates were able to run high vote totals in urban areas which gave them closer races to their opponent. Booker had the highest vote share within urban centers giving him the edge to create the closest contest between the two candidates.

Two municipalities voted with a different political party than how they did in the presidential election. Absecon City voted for Trump in the presidential election, but Booker in the senatorial, and East Greenwich Township voted for Biden in the presidential election and then voted for Mehta in the senatorial election.

Booker's likability gave him an opportunity to make headway in this race compared to the 2018 Democratic candidate, Robert Menendez, who was seen unfavorably by the district. Thirteen municipalities who had voted for the Republican candidate, Bob Hugin, in the 2018 midterms flipped to vote for Booker during this election, resulting in a closer race between the two candidates in the district than in 2018.

2020 Results for Senate in the 2nd Congressional District

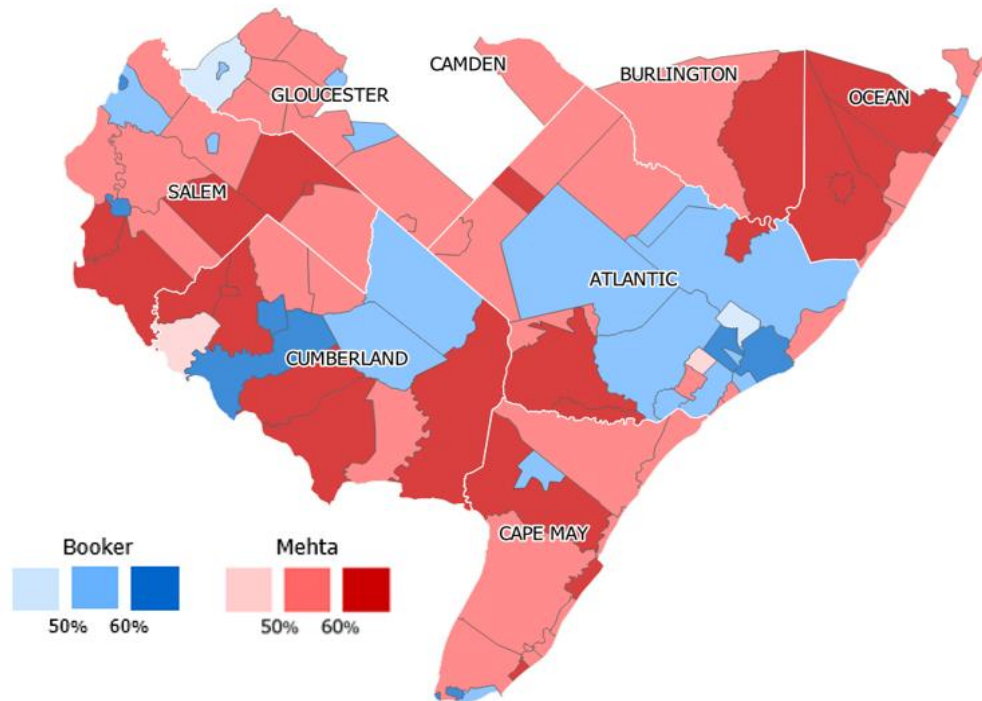


Figure 2. Municipality results of the 2020 election for Senate in New Jersey's 2nd Congressional District, shown by the winning candidate's vote share.

Table 5. County results of the 2020 election for senate in New Jersey's 2nd Congressional District.

County	Booker	Mehta
Atlantic	53%	45%
Burlington	32%	67%
Camden	42%	57%
Cape May	42%	57%
Cumberland	53%	44%
Gloucester	46%	52%
Ocean	37%	62%
Salem	43%	53%

Table 6. Mehta’s five largest vote shares amongst the municipalities within the 2nd Congressional District.

Municipality	Mehta Vote Share
Lower Alloways Creek Twp.	75%
Bass River Twp.	71%
Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	70%
Eagleswood Twp.	69%
Estell Manor City	69%

Table 7. Booker’s five largest vote shares amongst the municipalities within the 2nd Congressional District.

Municipality	Booker Vote Share
Pleasantville City	82%
Salem City	80%
Atlantic City	78%
Bridgeton City	75%
Cape May Point Borough	74%

Table 8. The difference between Trump’s percentage of the vote and Mehta’s percentage of the vote in each county in the 2nd Congressional District.

County	Trump % - Mehta %
Atlantic	0%
Burlington	1%
Camden	1%
Cape May	1%
Cumberland	2%
Gloucester	-1%
Ocean	-2%
Salem	2%

Table 8. The difference between Biden’s percentage of the vote and Bookers’ percentage of the vote in each county in the 2nd Congressional District.

County	Biden % - Booker %
Atlantic	0%
Burlington	-1%
Camden	-1%
Cape May	0%
Cumberland	-1%
Gloucester	1%
Ocean	3%
Salem	-1%

CONGRESS

The Republican candidate and incumbent, Jeff Van Drew, won reelection for the New Jersey 2nd Congressional District seat. Van Drew beat the Democrat, Amy Kennedy, by six percentage points, a winning margin that was double Trump’s winning margin over Biden and triple Mehta’s winning margin over Booker. Trump won the district 193,906 to 183,151 for Biden. Kennedy was unable to achieve the same vote share as Biden and Booker, with two percentage points less vote share than them overall in the district. Van Drew was able to have a one percentage point higher vote share than Trump and two percentage points more than Mehta.

The counties within the district voted along the same party lines as the presidential and senatorial race. Kennedy also won Atlantic and Cumberland County like Booker and Biden, but her winning margins trailed both of theirs. She was only able to outperform Biden’s vote share in Camden County, which is a very small portion of the district. Kennedy had the same vote share as Biden in Salem County and had the same vote share as Booker in Camden and Ocean County. She was outperformed by Biden and Booker in the rest of the counties. Van Drew had a larger winning margin than Mehta in all the GOP-won counties except Camden County. Van

Drew's vote share exceeded Mehta's in all the counties apart from Camden and Ocean County, where they were the same. Trump and Van Drew had the same winning margin in Burlington County. Trump had larger winning margins in Camden and Salem County, but Van Drew had larger winning margins in Cape May, Gloucester, and Ocean County. Trump and Van Drew had the same vote share in Burlington and Cumberland County. Trump only had one percentage point more vote share than Van Drew in Salem and Camden County. Whereas, Van Drew had higher vote shares than Trump in four counties with the highest difference being a four-percentage point difference in Cape May County.

A few of the municipalities were highly contested between Van Drew and Kennedy. Five municipalities had a difference of one percentage point or less. That low of a winning margin is only seen twice in each of the other races (Absecon City and Northfield City). Kennedy won Woolwich township with a .2% difference and Somers Point City with a .1% difference. She also won Egg Harbor Township and Ventnor City with a 1 percentage point winning margin and Van Drew won Cape May City with a 1-point percentage winning margin as well. Over a quarter of Kennedy's wins were with less than a five-percentage point winning margin, while only two percent of Van Drew's wins fell into that category. While Kennedy had the lowest winning margins, she also had the two highest, having a 58-percentage point winning margin in Pleasantville City and Salem City.

There were three municipalities that did not conform to one party throughout the three races: Absecon City, Cape May City, and East Greenwich Township. Van Drew won all three of these municipalities over Kennedy. Van Drew won Absecon City and Cape May City during the 2018 midterm elections as a Democrat with a larger margin than he did during this election cycle as a Republican. East Greenwich Township voted Republican in both elections, but Van Drew had a larger winning margin over Kennedy this election than Seth Grossman did over him in the 2018 election.

2020 Results for Congress in the 2nd Congressional District

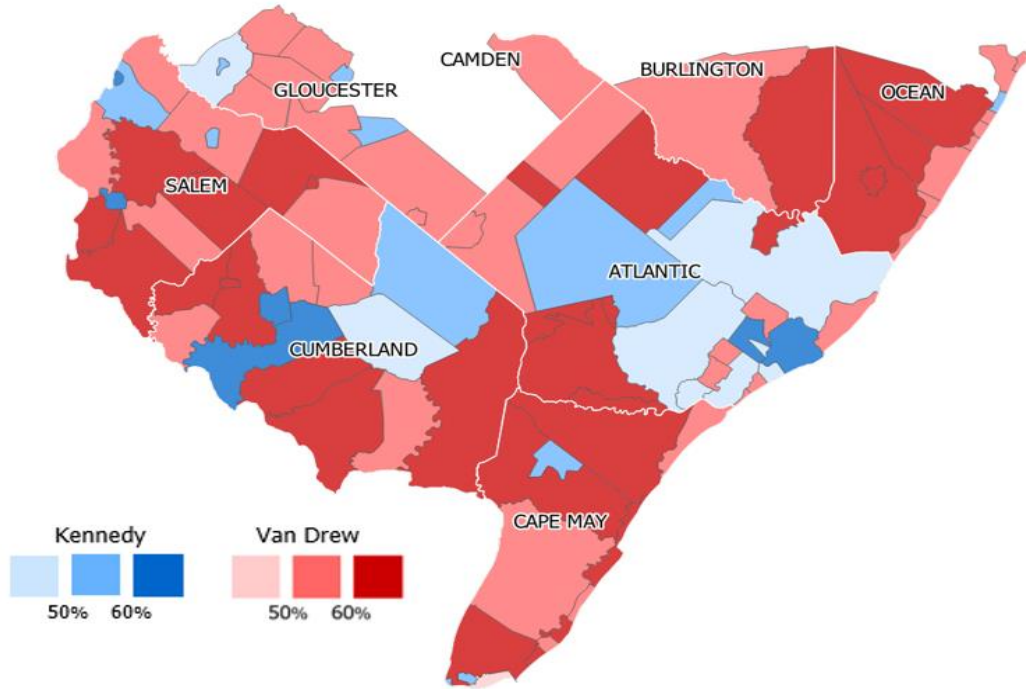


Figure 3. Municipality results of the 2020 election for Congress in New Jersey’s 2nd congressional district, shown by the winning candidate’s vote share.

Table 9. County results of the 2020 election for congress in New Jersey’s 2nd congressional district.

County	Kennedy	Van Drew
Atlantic	51%	48%
Burlington	30%	68%
Camden	42%	57%
Cape May	38%	61%
Cumberland	51%	47%
Gloucester	45%	52%
Ocean	36%	62%
Salem	42%	54%

Table 10. Van Drew’s five largest vote shares amongst the municipalities within the 2nd congressional district.

Municipality	Vote Share
Lower Alloways Creek Twp.	75%
Downe Twp.	73%
Bass River Twp.	73%
Estell Manor City	71%
Upper Pittsgrove	71%

Table 11. Kennedy’s five largest vote shares amongst the municipalities within the 2nd congressional district.

Municipality	Vote Share
Pleasantville City	78%
Salem City	77%
Bridgeton City	74%
Penns Grove Boro	73%
Atlantic City	71%

Table 12. The difference between Biden and Booker’s percentage of the vote compared to Kennedy’s for each county.

County	Biden % - Kennedy %	Booker % - Kennedy %
Atlantic	4%	5%
Cape May	8%	14%
Cumberland	2%	5%
Gloucester	5%	1%
Ocean	9%	2%
Salem	1%	3%

Table 13. The difference between Trump and Mehta’s percentage of the vote compared to Van Drew’s for each county.

County	Trump % - Van Drew %	Mehta % - Van Drew %
Atlantic	-3%	-3%
Burlington	-1%	-4%
Camden	2%	0%
Cape May	-7%	-7%
Cumberland	-1%	-4%
Gloucester	-1%	-1%
Ocean	-4%	-9%
Salem	2%	-2%

CONCLUSION

The political landscape of the New Jersey 2nd Congressional District is one that is still changing and evolving. All three races were won by the Republican candidate with virtually no ticket splitting in the municipalities throughout the district, but it was by no means a runaway election for any of the candidates within the district. Jeff Van Drew gained the highest vote total (195,507 votes) amongst all of the candidates in the three races showing that his transfer to running as a Republican had little hindrance to his campaign for reelection. Van Drew’s results prove that many of the municipalities in the district may lean towards his party. The Republican candidates took advantage of the large rural areas and won the majority of municipalities in the district, while the Democratic candidates were able to create large wins for themselves in urban centers.

It is seen through this election cycle that Democrats will continue to run high vote totals in high population areas and urban centers in the district while Republicans will continue to solidly win more rural municipalities. To win future elections candidates must garner more

support from the suburban areas, where the races tend to be closer between the two parties, than their opponent. The sprawling 2nd District is seen as traditionally Republican-leaning and contains large stretches of rural towns friendly to the GOP. It is also seen through this election that the municipalities within the district have not shifted much in political party alignment since 2016. It cannot be counted out, however, that there will not be changes seen in future elections.

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