News
Analysis



Virginia Attorney General-elect Jay Jones waves during an election night event at the Greater Richmond Convention Center in downtown Richmond. (Stephanie Scarbrough/Associated Press)

Nate Tinner-Williams

View Author Profile

Black Catholic Messenger

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

November 6, 2025

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Election night results are in, and a pair of prominent races stand as microcosms of a youth-fueled Democratic wave that swept through the nation in an off-year temperature test amid the second Trump administration.

Sitting near the top of the list was a surprise result in the race for Virginia attorney general, with the Democrats' Jay Jones, 36, triumphing over incumbent Republican Jason Miyares in a matchup recently colored by scandal.

The revelation last month of text messages from 2022 showing Jones justifying violence against his then-colleague in the Virginia General Assembly, House Speaker Todd Gilbert—as well as Gilbert's children—saw a subsequent shift in polling that left the race a toss-up ahead of Election Day.

In the end, the devoutly Catholic Jones won handily, taking well over half of the vote with 96% of precincts reporting. He is set to become Virginia's first-ever Black attorney general when he takes office in January. The race was a marked change of pace from 2021, when Miyares beat incumbent Mark Herring by a razor-thin margin to become the state's first Latino elected to statewide office.

Jones spoke of his victory this week as the result of successful advocacy for safety, civil rights, and the rule of law.

"This was a hard-fought campaign, but at the end of the day, this election has never been about me or my opponent," Jones said during a victory speech at the Greater Richmond Convention Center in downtown Richmond.

"It has always been about every single one of us and the future of Virginia."

In Texas, a more predictable race also saw a pair of Democrats net a positive result, though still extending the long wait to fill a long-vacant congressional seat.

The special election for the state's 18th district, comprising most of inner-city Houston and a number of suburbs, matched most polling predictions, with 37-year-old Harris County Attorney Christian Menefee advancing to a runoff against former Houston city councilwoman Amanda Edwards, 43, a Black Catholic who ran for the seat last year.

Advertisement

The district—which now sees its fourth election since 2022—has been unrepresented in Washington since March, when 70-year-old Rep. Sylvester Turner died after two months in office and a battle with bone cancer. He defeated Edwards in the Harris County Democrats' internal vote for the 2024 general election candidate after the death of incumbent Sheila Jackson Lee, 74, from pancreatic cancer. (Lee had defeated Edwards in the Democratic primary earlier that year.)

On Wednesday morning with 99% of precincts reporting in the 2025 jungle primary, Menefee held a lead with 28.9% of the vote, while Edwards stood in a relatively close second at 25.6%.

"This is a collective effort, and this is an effort that has been this way because we are doing this on a mission for the people," Edwards said after seeing early voting results during her election night event at Late August restaurant in Midtown Houston.

"Each and every single time that we talk about this mission or goal, it's never been just to get me elected. It has always been about making sure that we create an 18th congressional district where each and every single person, no matter what their background, no matter where they live, has the opportunity not just to get by day to day, but our goal is to truly have people thrive."

No candidate reached the 50% threshold to avoid a runoff, which will now take place on a date to be determined by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott. He previously delayed the special election after Turner's death, maintaining his party's slight majority in the U.S. House of Representatives.

As a result, the runoff winner will have only a few months in office before being in another high-profile race. By next month, prospective candidates for the 2026 midterm election will need to file for that race's party primary. The latter is scheduled for March 2026, though with new gerrymandered district boundaries created by the state's GOP-led state legislature this summer.

78-year-old Rep. Al Green has hinted that he will run in next year's primary, as his 9th district seat will then be within the boundaries of the newly redrawn 18th district.

The latter district's seat has been held by African Americans since 1973, when Barbara Jordan became the first Black woman in Congress from the South. She was succeeded by a Black Catholic in Mickey Leland, who died in office in 1989. He was followed by Craig Washington, who last year endorsed Edwards' primary campaign. She has since picked up an endorsement from Leland's wife, University of Houston law professor Alison Leland.

This story was originally published in the Black Catholic Messenger.