



LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

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Governor Concedes Re-election Defeat

Uncertainty Ended: Nearly a month after the Nov. 8 election, Republican Gov. Pat McCrory today announced that he is conceding the election to Democrat Roy Cooper, the state's attorney general, and will support transition efforts. McCrory made the concession in a [video message posted around noon today](#) as a recount he requested in Durham County entered its final hours, The News & Observer reported.

Durham officials plan to finish the recount later Monday at a time when early results from the recount showed no significant change in the vote tally there. "I personally believe that the majority of our citizens have spoken, and we now should do everything we can to support the 75th governor of North Carolina, Roy Cooper," McCrory said in the video. "The McCrory administration team will assist in every way to help the new administration make a smooth transition.

"It's time to celebrate our democratic process and respect what I see to be the ultimate outcome of the closest North Carolina governor's race in modern history," the governor added, appearing relaxed and wearing a blazer without a tie and sitting with a Christmas tree in the background.

Historic Connotations, Background, Next Steps: The concession today means that McCrory becomes the state's first governor to lose a re-election bid since a constitutional amendment in the 1970s authorized governors to seek more than one term. His loss is punctuated by nation's second most expensive gubernatorial race and North Carolina's costliest ever, according to the newspaper.

McCrory's acknowledgement today follows dozens of election complaints filed by Republicans with help from the governor's campaign. Most of the complaints were dismissed by GOP-controlled county election boards. He mentioned those concerns in his concession video, citing "continued questions that should be answered regarding the voting process."

Cooper issued a written statement soon after McCrory's concession. "I want to thank Gov. McCrory and our First Lady Ann McCrory for their service to our state," Cooper wrote. "Kristin and I look forward to working with them and their staff in what I expect will be a smooth transition. I'm proud to have received the support from so many who believe that we can come together to make a North Carolina that works for everyone...While this was a divisive election season, I know still that there is more that unites us than divides us."

Political Fallout: Cooper's clout as governor will be tempered by the state legislature, which after last month's statewide elections was able to maintain its Republican supermajority in both chambers. That means that the GOP has enough votes to override Cooper's veto of bills that Democrats oppose. And he'll need support from Republican legislators to accomplish his policy goals. Still, some observers note that the new governor will have something of a bully pulpit in being able to spotlight issues and concerns he has that may be at odds with the legislature but which also may have support from voters.

The timing of McCrory's announcement surprised some as Durham County's recount was still under way, with about 2,500 ballots still to be recounted as of Monday afternoon. Durham officials faced a 7 p.m. deadline to complete the recount. Still, by the time McCrory's video was released at noon, it was becoming apparent that the recount process was not finding any vote counting errors that could change the outcome of the initial tabulations.

What's Next: With McCrory's concession, the media spotlight now can now turn to Cooper's transition efforts ahead of his January inauguration at a time when his transition has been underway without much fanfare in recent weeks. The transition is being led by Ken Eudy – a former political reporter for The Charlotte Observer who founded strategic communications firm Capstrat – as well as Kristi Jones, Cooper's longtime chief of staff in the justice department, and attorney Jim W. Phillips Jr., who has known Cooper since their UNC-Chapel Hill days.

Other News

State Board Action: The State Board of Education voted Thursday to allow 19 low-performing traditional public schools to be run like charter schools in an effort to improve student achievement. The 19 schools will receive the same flexibility that charter schools now get to set their school calendars and to spend state funds. Leaders at those schools are eyeing potential changes for the 2017-18 school year including longer school years, longer school days and new programs to reduce class sizes and offer more training and other resources.

Quotes of the Week

"I didn't see what one coming."

- U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan on Donald Trump winning the race to become President-elect (60 Minutes, 12/4/16)

"It was a wonderful crowd. Gosh, I'd like to play in front of a crowd like that in the Smith Center every night other than the frickin' Duke game. And that was just congratulations to them, their fans, their students. It was a big time."

- Roy Williams, UNC men's basketball coach on North Carolina's 76-67 loss to Indiana last week.

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