

North carolina gubernatorial election



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The election for governor of North Carolina proved to be tightly contested race; with Richard Vinroot the republican candidate gaining support in the weeks immediately prior to the election. Mike Easley had an early advantage, being the democratic incumbent. Easley was the better-known and better-financed candidate, which helped him to an early advantage. However, during the final weeks of the campaign the advantage swung to Vinroot as undecided voters were swept up in a republican surge lead by the momentum gained by presidential candidate Bush.

With the gubernatorial race growing ever closer, the candidate" s stance on issues began to stand out as the determining factor for many voters. Thus, Democrat Mike Easley was able to gain an advantage not because of party affiliation, but the due to his stance on important issues, one important issue being education. So how did the numbers stake up? Well the final elections showed Mike Easley receiving 1, 492, 170 votes or 52 percent of the vote; Richard Vinroot received 1, 335, 862 votes or 47 percent of the vote; the rest of the vote being split between the Libertarian and Reform candidates .

The 2000 North Carolina gubernatorial election was closely contested and would be decided not mainly according party affiliation, but by the candidate" s stance on major issues. The Democratic candidate for governor Mike Easley has a strong background, which brought him public favor and votes. Michael F. Easley is 50 years old, was born in Nash County, received a degree in Political Science from the University of North Carolina, and gained a law degree from North Carolina Central University.

Easley served as a District Attorney, which gained him a reputation due to his prosecution of drug traffickers. Easley was elected the Attorney General of North Carolina in 1992. He was re-elected in 1996 by a large margin receiving 60 percent on the vote. While he was Attorney General, Easley gained a strong reputation, Easley sought to reduce violent crimes by pushing for a new sentencing structure and removal of the prison cap. Easley was fairly successful, " Since he took office in 1993, the rate of violent crime in North Carolina has fallen by more than 15%.

Easley also gained a strong reputation due to his efforts of attacking consumer fraud, creating a Citizen's Rights Division, and increasing the environmental section with the creation of an Environmental Crimes Task Force. As Attorney General, Easley also contributed to the national tobacco settlement, and " Brought nearly \$5 billion in revenue to North Carolina to protect farmers, communities and the public health. 2" Mike Easley" s stance on important issues played an important role in the election. One important issue, which Easley highlighted, was his plan for patient" s rights.

His plan includes patient privacy and a system that would provide prescription drugs for the elderly. While campaigning Easley outlined his plan for patient" s rights, however he made it apparent that his major concern was his " No Excuses" approach to education. The main points in Easley" s plan are smaller class sizes, and a pre-kindergarten program. The staple of Easley" s plan is not to raise taxes, with financing coming from a state lottery. Easley" s focuses on three aspects in his education plan; character education, alternative schools, and dress codes.

Easley" s education plan states, " In order to enhance academic performance and safety in our public schools, we must nurture the personal character of young people while demanding that all students be disciplined and appropriately attired. " Candidate Mike Easley brought his strong reputation, and stance on important issues to the gubernatorial campaign in order to gain popular support. Richard Vinroot the Republican candidate for governor also brought his strong reputation and background to the campaign trail.

Vinroot like Easley also had a long list of credentials and a strong background, which helped him win public favor. Vinroot was awarded a Morehead Scholarship to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he received a degree in business administration and later his law degree. Vinroot is also a Vietnam veteran and was awarded a Bronze Star for his service. In 1991, Vinroot was elected mayor of Charlotte and was re-elected in 1993. As mayor of Charlotte Vinroot focused on crime, while he was mayor crime dropped 17 percent.

Vinroot also focused on taxpayer relief. One of the major issues in Vinroot" s campaign was also education. Vinroot made it apparent that he supported tax paid vouchers, which gives parents a choice to send their children to the school of their choice. Vinroot" s plan supports home schooling and vouchers for children to attend private schools. Vinroot also supports a pay system for teachers based on merit. Vinroot" s main stance during the campaign was that he continually promised to never raise taxes and offered real change in education.

Richard Vinroot gained public support in the gubernatorial campaign with a strong personal background, and by pronouncing never to raise taxes. The Reform candidate, Douglas Schell, and Libertarian candidate, Barbara Howe, offered voters additional choices for governor. However, both candidates played an insignificant role in the election with each candidate receiving about one percent of the vote. Similarly to Easley and Vinroot, both candidates' main issue was education. Howe's education plan was a tax-based scholarship system giving the student an option when it comes to education.

Schell's stance on education was a plan for initiating a minimum salary for teachers, and focusing on discipline and school standards. However, both candidates were severely under funded; lacking the resources like Easley and Vinroot were able to attain. Thus, the Reform and Libertarian candidates played an insignificant role in the election. Richard Vinroot the republican candidate for governor hoped to ride the coattails of George Bush. Vinroot did gain support because of Bush strength in North Carolina, but this only helped make the race contested.

However, Vinroot was unable to seize upon Bush's support in North Carolina to become governor. Vinroot tried to play the connection with Bush to the fullest, thus making a late comeback. Unfortunately for Vinroot, several other factors caused Mike Easley to seize the election. The election showed that image, personality, and more importantly stance on issues wins votes rather than party affiliation. An important factor in swaying voters to Easley was his standing on important issues, especially the education issue. Easley was able to gain votes by strongly opposing tax-paid vouchers for education.

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In addition, Easley's plan for education was more widely accepted including his pushing for a state lottery to pay for education. Some distinctions that caused the party splitting in North Carolina, was Easley's stance on education. Image and personality also played key factors in Mike Easley's election win. These traits were made apparent to voters in the campaigning through the numerous television ads and in the debate. Television ads played an important role in the campaigns of both candidates. Easley, due to better finance was able to run more television ads, allowing him to run more issue-focused ads.

Conversely, Vinroot ran many ads attacking Easley in an effort to label him as a liberal, and associate of Al Gore. Vinroot's attacks gave him an aggressive image, which hurt him in the election. Vinroot's aggressive image was also apparent in the one television debate, Vinroot even grabbed Easley's arm during the debate. Television ads also helped contribute to Mike Easley's election win, especially the ads Easley ran the weekend before the election. Easley's last television ads played upon the popularity of actor Andy Griffith, who endorsed Easley in those final ads.

Image and personality are important to voters and these characteristics favored Mike Easley. The first North Carolina governor of the 21st century won an election that became tightly contested due to party affiliation. However, in the end it was not party affiliation that was the determining factor in the election. The determining factors in the election were the candidate's stance on major issues, namely the issue of education, and the candidate's image and personality. Richard Vinroot made the election contested by playing heavily on the popularity of George W.

Bush; this did not however carry him into office. Voters broke party lines and voted for the candidate who best addressed their needs. Mike Easley was able to win because he promised to improve education without raising taxes due to a state lottery. Richard Vinroot had a chance in the gubernatorial election by trying to ride the coattails of George W. Bush, but when it came down to it voters concerned themselves not with party affiliation, but concerned themselves with the current issues, with the greatest emphasis on the issue of improving education.