

**The
BLACK
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on issues affecting African Americans
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**Blue Virginia
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Virginia and the rest of the old South always voted for Democrats for president when the Democratic party stood for racism, and for Republicans when the Republican party stood for racism, until tonight. Virginia just voted for a Democrat for president, while the Republican party still carries the banner of racism. In fact, the Republican candidates played up their racism more this year than in other recent elections. In addition, the Democratic candidate was black. It's a new South.

Virginia is now a blue state, as is Florida, and at the time I wrote this it looked likely that North Carolina would be, too. Other new blue states are: Ohio, Iowa, Colorado, New Mexico, and Nevada. Other undecided states that used to be red are: Indiana, Missouri, Montana, and Alaska. It's a whole new map.

Of course, nothing is that black and white. Barack Obama's father was black and his mother white, so we call him black. When 51 percent of a state votes for a party, we apply that label to the state. Virginia voted 52 to 48 for Obama, and at the same time voted 64 to 35 for Mark Warner for Senate. Warner is a Democrat, but a white one. According to exit polls, only 41 percent of white Virginians backed Obama, and 20 percent of whites said race was a factor in their decision to back McCain. Meanwhile 40 percent of blacks said that race was a factor in their decision to back Obama, which 91 percent of blacks did. What put Obama over in Virginia was not the end of racism, but the end of support for George W. Bush, of whom 72 percent of voters said they disapproved. At the time I wrote this, North Carolina was too close to call for president, but had elected a white Democratic senator by a margin of 53 to 44 percent. And 71 percent of North Carolina voters said they disapproved of George W. Bush.

Here in Virginia's Fifth District, we've long been misrepresented by one of Congress's most aggressive racists, Virgil Goode. Tonight I was present for the victory speech of his Democratic challenger, Tom Perriello. But the vote was so close that Goode may challenge the outcome. At best, I guess we should say that Virginia is purple. Like the nation as a whole, Virginia pulled off an election in which the presidential outcome matched the exit polls and the popular vote and did not have to be decided by lawyers. But there were 863 polling place problems reported to Election Protection, and many voters in the Fifth District voted on DRE machines, which means that no recount of their votes will be possible.

Obama has an even more militarist and corporatist platform than Bill Clinton, and yet the past eight years have made Obama seem like, and be, a dramatic change for the better. We should celebrate, and the world will join us in celebrating, the defeat of the party of Bush and Cheney. And yet we cannot celebrate having allowed them to remain in office for eight full years. We need to push now to impeach them and to prosecute them for their crimes. Restoring the rule of law to the White House in that way will have a bigger impact on the behavior of future presidents than any election. While unity and bipartisanship sound pleasant, they should not become justifications for lawlessness.

The Democrats, come January, will hold the White House and sizable majorities in the House and Senate, including a filibuster-proof 60 seats or very close to it in the Senate. (And Republican senators from states with Democratic governors could be given cabinet positions, and the District of Columbia could be given one or more senators.) The Republican party may be on the way out of existence. The question is what we can make of the Democrats, what we can persuade them to do. If they are truly democrats with a small d, they will have a lot to accomplish and almost no excuses not to do so.

They can begin with the positive steps advocated by Obama during his campaign: afterdowningstreet.org We can build on those advances by insisting on more decisive measures to shift our resources from war to peace and green energy. We can start now by lobbying the president elect to hire and appoint as his staff and administration, individuals who represent change we can believe in.

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
BlackCommentator.com Guest Commentator, David Swanson, is co-founder of the AfterDowningStreet.org coalition and a board member of Progressive Democrats of America. His website is www.davidswanson.org. Click [here](#) to contact Mr. Swanson.

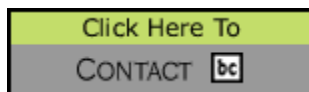
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