ABC's Vote 2026: Election Night
11/03/26
6:07:33 p.m.
1 minute and 14 seconds

STEVE OSUNSAMI: Keisha Lance Bottoms, she's a former mayor of Atlanta, well known. She is was — was presided over the city during the street protests of the 2020 era, and there are a lot of people who have criticisms for how she ran the city then — and during that period. She did not run for reelection. If she wins tonight, if there is some sort of blue wave, if there is a — you know, a move to put Democrat in office across the country, if she's part of that this evening, she would become the first black woman governor in the history of these United States, and she would be the first Democratic governor in the state of Georgia in about 30 years. Kyra, as you know, we've talked about this quite a bit. You know, I've lived here for almost 30 years. It would be monumentous if she won. It would absolutely be a sign to many that things have changed over the past several years. Georgia has certainly become a swing state, no question. You know, the 2020 election, the election that the President contested that was so close that, Joe — that Joe Biden won, you know, a Democrat winning in this state. It's — we're absolutely a swing state, and the question tonight is just how purple we've become, Kyra.

(....)

7:49:59 p.m.
1 minute and 29 seconds

DAVID MUIR: Jon Ossoff is a Democratic senator, obviously from the state of Georgia. The only one tonight in a Republican state that Donald Trump won two years ago, looking for reelection. So far, he's got to be happy with what he is seeing.

OSUNSAMI: He is. I'm — I'm talking to people from his campaign, from the Collins campaign, and also from two different campaigns for governor. I can tell you, David, I have lived here for 30 years, I have been covering elections here for a very long time, I can say that I have never seen Democrats this cautiously optimistic during an election. To steal the words out of one of the operatives who I talked with just a second ago, she said that it's nauseatingly optimistic. One of the things you have all been talking about that has happened here in Georgia: the record early voting here really mattered. We're going to see the rest of that vote come in over the next few minutes. It was 2.8 million voters; we are expecting about four million. Republicans today needed about 1.4 million votes — people who walked into the polls today, people living in rural counties going to vote. It is not quite clear that that threshold happened, and that will be something to watch tonight that will indicate how this night is going. There are lots of rumors about what is going to happen this evening. But everyone, of course, is watching the results of this early vote to see how big of a lead it gives the Democrats here.

(....)

8:25:27 p.m.

1 minute and 46 seconds

KYRA PHILLIPS: What is the vibe of the room, Steve?

OSUNSAMI: The vibe is ecstatic; the vibe is cautiously optimistic for the other candidates. You know, I've got to tell you, they have been cheering all night here. And every Democratic candidate for state office is here, with the exception of Keisha Lance Bottoms, who is running for governor; they are all in the room because they are all hoping for celebrations tonight. There is definitely a sense that, with Jon Ossoff and his victory here, that all the other boats will rise with the wonderful tide that they are hoping they will be seeing here tonight. The key here is two things. One, the massive early vote: 2.8 million people voted, a record midterm vote. Those votes favor the blue counties around Atlanta, which are now even bluer than before. Georgia is now officially purple, I think people here would argue.

PHILLIPS: Well, Steve, the governor's race, as you have been talking about now, has been tight. Let's talk about the defining issue for Democrat Keisha Lance Bottoms and also Republican Rick Jackson.

OSUNSAMI: So, the defining issue for Keisha Lance Bottoms in terms of the attacks against her, of course, has been her handling of the city during the street protests and accusations that she let parts of the city burn. Jackson, the biggest knock against him of course, is he is an outsider, someone who has no experience in government, and that he is trying to buy this election because he is a billionaire. But I've got to tell you, if you had asked me three weeks ago, whether or not Jackson or Keisha Lance Bottoms would win, I would say advantage was to Jackson. But the numbers tonight are pointing in the other direction. A lot of people are watching that.

(....)

9:33:38 p.m.
6 minutes and 8 seconds

DAVID MUIR: But the lead story, the lead headline this half hour and will be up for many more hours here at, but 9:30 Eastern, we can call that in Georgia, the governor, Keisha Lance Bottoms, is a governor-elect, former mayor of Atlanta. Significant history being made here. I want to bring in Linsey Davis, who has been following this race. She was the mayor of Atlanta. She will now serve as the governor. She's up against Rick Jackson, a businessman with a compelling story of his own. But she has won with a sizable lead tonight.

LINSEY DAVIS: Certainly, and Rick Jackson who we saw grew up in foster care, spent $250 million of his own money.

MUIR: Own money, yeah.

DAVIS: She repeatedly said on the campaign trail, he may have the money, but the people have the power. I'm struck by two things. It really speaks to how long this took and at the same time,

how far this country has come that you now have the first black female governor of any state in this country. So, tonight, a barrier falls in Georgia. It really writes a new chapter in American history. There are those election nights, David, that you remember for the margins and those for the milestones, and this is one certainly for the history books. When I was in Georgia with her last month, I had the opportunity to ask her what this moment would mean if she became the first black female governor, and she said, for me, 'it's much more personal. My family goes back at least five generations in Georgia. For me, it speaks to the possibility of this state and this country only in America.' She is a descendant of the enslaved on both sides, and one thing that I found that was really poignant was on election eve — so yesterday, she went and visited the gravestone of her great-great-grandmother who was born enslaved in this country, and now, generations later, she becomes the first black female governor of any state.

MUIR: Yeah, it's a remarkable story tonight. A milestone met in Georgia and also, if you look at the state of Georgia, which had been red for a bit, now has two senators who are Democrats, and the governor of Georgia is now making history tonight. I want to bring in Steve Osunsami, who is in Georgia for us tonight. And, Steve, this is a major headline. Keisha Lance Bottoms, the next governor of Georgia.

OSUNSAMI: David, I don't think it could be overstated what's happening in Georgia tonight. Jon Ossoff, who is speaking here behind me right now, was the vehicle who lifted the waters for all of these candidates, including Keisha Lance Bottoms. I keep looking at my phone and refreshing the numbers, and I'm having trouble believing it. All of the state candidates for office in Georgia, the Democrats are ahead here. Keisha Lance Bottoms, when you talk about her campaign, Linsey Davis was right. The other candidate outspent her gigantically. I have a prop that I have been saving for this moment. These are the fliers that have come to my home, and like 80 percent of them are from Rick Jackson. I have got very few of these from Keisha Lance Bottoms. He ran an incredible campaign, and she still won. When you — when you look at what happened here and what's happening in Georgia, we have Republicans now who control all levers of state government here who are telling me that this is now a blue state, and this is significant because, as we have been talking about, the man speaking directly behind me, lots of people are looking at him with googly eyes about possibly running for president in a couple of years. This is the first step. Keisha Lance Bottoms winning helps him with that. This is something I've never seen. It's hard for me to even accept that this is a blue state, as people are saying, but that appears to be what is happening tonight in Georgia.

MUIR: So, let's ask you about that. In addition to the history made by Keisha Lance Bottoms, the former mayor of Atlanta. Of course, people remember her. She had a role in the Biden administration. She was also in Atlanta during the time of Covid. People got to know her around the country as a national figure through all of that. She makes history tonight. Jon Ossoff, who repeatedly, Steve said on the trail, I have no interest in running for president. We've heard that from candidates before who then had a significant victory, and then it propels them to the national stage. And, of course, I don't want to get ahead of ourselves, but at the same time, you have to state the obvious here, that he is a name that has been widely talked about this campaign cycle. Not only, and that was before the victory tonight. This is a sizable victory for really both of these candidates. Jon Ossoff and Keisha Lance Bottoms. But when it comes to Jon Ossoff,

people are immediately going to say, a Democrat from the South, a sizable victory, and they're going to look to his campaign he stayed on message. He was not afraid to take on the current president and talked what he thought about the issues that were important to the people, the economy, gas prices, the health care. But also, one of the first candidates to really make corruption, as he saw it, a significant issue for his campaign and people are going to ask, is he going to quietly be considering a run for president?

OSUNAMI: So, I have asked people that tonight, I've asked his people directly — I keep asking and the response I keep getting is that Jon Ossoff is going to remain senator, that he's going to do that job. And then I follow that with, you know, we've heard that before. You know, have to sort of look at the conditions and look at what's happening. And sort of believe that that's a real possibility, and they have to be thinking about that. There is also a second senator who is here tonight, Senator Warnock, who is also being talked about as potentially a candidate in a couple of years for president. So, that conversation is only going to get louder and louder and louder because it will be fair to say that he, Jon Ossoff, who again, who is speaking right now, led what many people see right now as a blue, and I hate to say wave, but wave in Georgia.

MUIR: Steve Osunsami witnessing what is a significant night in the state of Georgia.