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# Americans Flocked to Red and Purple Counties in Key Senate-Race States During the Pandemic

*Redfin reports purple counties in Georgia, Nevada and Arizona—all key to this year’s Senate elections—gained thousands of residents and became more diverse during the pandemic*

SEATTLE--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- (NASDAQ: RDFN) — More residents moved into red and purple counties in states key to this year’s Senate elections in 2021 than any year in the last decade, according to a new [report](#) from Redfin ([redfin.com](#)), the technology-powered real estate brokerage.

Red (Republican-leaning) counties in key states gained roughly 340,000 residents from migration in 2021, the biggest gain since at least 2012. Purple (swing) counties in key states gained about 289,000 residents, also the largest increase in the last 10 years. “Key” states are those in which either candidate [has a shot at winning](#) in the upcoming Senate elections: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

The trend is similar for purple counties in non-key states, with those gaining roughly 271,000 residents. Red counties in non-key states gained about 509,000 residents.

## **Migration into toss-up counties in key states increased diversity, which could help Democrats in the upcoming midterms**

Red and purple counties in key states have become more diverse since the pandemic began, continuing a decade-long trend. Both red and purple counties in key states are less white by about one percentage point than they were in 2019, before the pandemic began.

Specifically, Hispanic Americans make up a slightly larger share of the population in purple counties in key states than they did before the pandemic, with their population share increasing by half of a percentage point from 2019 to 2021. Black and Asian Americans each barely increased their population share in purple counties in key states during the pandemic, but they have both trended upward over the last decade. 2021 is the most recent year for which this data is available; diversification likely continued throughout 2022.

<b>Share of population by race, key states only, 2019 vs. 2021</b>						
<i>Red = Republican-leaning; purple = swing; blue = Democratic-leaning</i>						
	Red counties: 2019	Red counties: 2021	Purple counties: 2019	Purple counties: 2021	Blue counties: 2019	Blue counties: 2021
White*	80.5%	79.7%	60.7%	59.9%	51.1%	50.4%
Black or African American*	7.7%	7.8%	12%	12.1%	27.1%	27.2%
Hispanic	8%	8.5%	20.7%	21.3%	13.7%	14%
Asian*	1.6%	1.7%	3.5%	3.6%	5.3%	5.4%

\*Non-hispanic members of race  
*Some racial groups were not included, so figures in each column may not add up to 100%.  
Each 12-month period ends halfway through the year. 2019 covers July 2018 through July 2019, and 2021 covers July 2020 through July 2021.*

Which party wins control of the Senate is a toss-up as of the end of October, according to polling. This year’s midterm elections are significant because they may determine the direction of the country on the economy, climate change and abortion, among other issues.

Increasing diversity *could* shift votes in purple counties toward Democrats. Eighty-seven percent of Black Americans voted for President Biden in the 2020 election, as did nearly two-thirds (65%) of Latino people and 61% of Asian people, according to a 2020 CNN exit poll.

“These changes in racial makeup are small but noteworthy,” said Redfin Deputy Chief Economist Taylor Marr. “The pandemic-driven wave of relocation to suburbs and rural areas—which tend to lean more conservative than city centers—made those toss-up places more diverse. The demographic shift isn’t big enough to turn solidly red places blue, but it could move the needle in purple areas.”

Marr continued: “Migration from California to Phoenix helped Democrats win Arizona in the 2020 presidential election for the first time in 24 years, and similar migration trends could tip the Senate midterms in Democrats’ favor in closely matched states like Georgia and Nevada.”

**But there are strong forces that could counteract increased diversity and favor Republicans**

“Americans sorting themselves into neighborhoods to live near people similar to them has progressed over the past four decades,” Marr said. “When people relocate, they often choose an area made up of people similar to them. Some of the people, regardless of their race, who left liberal places and moved into red or purple counties were likely frustrated by local responses to the pandemic and relocated to places that better matched their lifestyles and political preferences.”

A Redfin survey conducted in October supports the self-sorting trend. Just 8% of U.S. residents would be enthusiastic about moving to an area where most residents don’t share their political views. Nearly half (46%) would be hesitant to move to such a place.

**Purple counties in Nevada, Georgia and Arizona—key to the Senate midterms—gained thousands of residents and became more diverse in 2021**

Of the 10 states likely in play for this year’s Senate midterms, Nevada and Georgia are particularly closely matched as of the end of October. Arizona is leaning Democrat, but it

could feasibly go either way. Winning both Nevada and Georgia would be a major boon for either party's chance of controlling the Senate.

In Nevada, roughly 20,000 residents moved into purple counties in 2021. The state's purple counties became nearly one percentage point less white, the biggest racial shift in at least a decade. In Georgia, purple counties gained roughly 4,000 residents in 2021. Georgia's purple counties are about half a percentage point less white.

And in Arizona, purple counties soared in popularity last year, gaining nearly 80,000 residents. Arizona's purple counties became nearly three-quarters of a percentage point less white, the biggest racial shift in at least a decade.

Additionally, those states typically attract new residents from traditionally blue areas. For instance, homebuyers moving to Las Vegas from out of town mostly come from Los Angeles, the Bay Area and Seattle. Homebuyers moving into Atlanta typically come from New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

But like the nation as a whole, other forces, like the state of the economy, may favor the Republican party in this year's midterms. And while some of those relocators are bringing a Democratic vote with them, others are moving somewhere that more closely aligns with their conservative values.

### **Blue counties in key states lost residents, but it's not likely to impact the midterm Senate elections**

Blue counties in key states followed the opposite trend as red and purple counties, *losing* about 127,000 residents from out-migration in 2021, the biggest population decline in at least the last decade. Blue counties in most key states became less white than they were before the pandemic, but not as quickly as red and purple counties.

But movement out of blue counties is more pronounced in states that *aren't* key to the Senate midterms, with those ones losing nearly 1.3 million residents. That means blue counties in key states are unlikely to lose their Democratic majorities.

To view the full report, including charts, please visit: <https://www.redfin.com/news/relocation-red-purple-counties-pandemic-election/>

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