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ELECTION 2000

High spirits at Easley HQ

◆ Mike Easley will replace outgoing Governor Jim Hunt.

Joan Plotnick
Correspondent

At 7:30 p.m., Democrats flocked to the North Raleigh Hilton anticipating a late night awaiting campaign results. Mike Easley supporters did not have long to wait.

At 7:44 p.m., with only 1 percent of the precincts reporting, Easley was leading his opponent, Richard Vinroot, by a margin of 50 percent to 49 percent. Three leading networks — CBS, CNN and NBC — had declared Mike Easley the winner. Deafening cheers filled the room.

By 10 p.m., with 67 percent of the precincts reporting, Easley was ahead 52 percent to 46 percent. Vinroot conceded.

Throughout his campaign, Mike Easley characterized himself as a progressive champion of working people.

Easley remembers the little guy, not just the big one, noted Worth Joyner, who volunteered for the Easley campaign from January through May. From May through November, he volunteered for Gore.

"We're a very diverse state and he is the best man to represent everyone — all working men and women," Joyner said.

Easley continued this theme in his victory speech.

"We started this race together," he announced to cheering supporters. "So that working families would have a voice in the governor's office."

"Well, tonight they will," Easley added. In contrast, Richard Vinroot defined himself as a champion of conservative principles and a protector of taxpayer rights. He characterized Easley as an "Al Gore Liberal."



Governor-elect Mike Easley celebrates his victory Tuesday night at the Democratic headquarters at the North Raleigh Hilton.

The four issues emphasized in this campaign — taxes, education, the environment and health care — highlight the differences between the two candidates.

Vinroot championed a "Taxpayer Protection Act" which limited tax increases to an index of

population increases and inflation. Easley stated that demographic shifts in certain population groups (such as school-aged children and the elderly) might necessitate increased services regardless of population increases.

Another area of contention was education.

Vinroot was a strong supporter of limited vouchers for students of failing schools. Easley argued that such a program would "bleed public schools dry" and offer no choices in many rural areas.

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Bonds pass easily

◆ N.C. State will receive \$468 million for facility upgrades.

Nicole Zaebst and
Jack Daly
Correspondents

Engineering students and faculty rejoiced Tuesday night when the \$3.1 billion community college and university bond referendum overwhelmingly passed in a vote of 74 to 26 percent.

Leaking roofs may become a thing of the past in Riddick Hall, where one engineering professor had to use a tent to keep his computer equipment protected from the rain. Of the \$3.1 billion bond, \$2.5 billion will be allotted for the 16-campus UNC system, and \$600 million has been set aside for the 59 North Carolina community colleges.

"This is a very important statement by the citizens of North Carolina in support of their university and community colleges," said Molly Broad, president of the UNC system. "There's no doubt about it."

N.C. State will be allocated \$468,256,655 with the passage of the bond. Chancellor Marye Anne Fox celebrated the evening with almost 200 others at the Brownstone Hotel. She stressed her pride in NCSU students for their active participation in campaigning for the bond.

"Obviously it's very important," Fox said. "It reflects a strong advocacy. It emphasizes the importance of education."

Although the bond was favored to win, it has encountered opposition in the past. In 1999, opposing viewpoints kept a higher education bond from reaching a vote in the General Assembly.



Chancellor Fox gets the thumbs up for the Higher Education Bond.

This time, however, NCSU and other universities were able to convince the public that it needed the facility upgrades.

"North Carolina State did a phenomenal job on the campus, in the greater community of Raleigh, but also with the extension services in each of the 100 counties," Broad said. "It was a powerful message to all parts of the state about the importance of the university."

Ben Ruffin, chairman of the UNC Board of Governors, said that this was the largest education bond ever passed in the United States. He said the bond passed because everyone in the state recognized the importance of improving educational facilities.

Andrew Payne, an NCSU student who is also the only student on the UNC Board of Governors, was excited about the outcome. "They voted to keep the doors of opportunity open,"

Payne said. "The only way to do that is to keep tuition as low as possible."

NCSU's College of Engineering is set to receive \$79,371,700 — almost 20 percent of NCSU's total.

"If you've ever had classes in an engineering building, you already know why," said Shu Fang, a professor of industrial engineering at NCSU.

In the Park Shops building, some windows are cracked and broken with little or no insulation, and the ceilings in the computer lab leak, destroying equipment when it rains. The classrooms are crammed with 35 to 40 students in rooms intended for 15 to 20.

Both the professors and the students in engineering are proud of their department, Fang said. They do feel, however, that this money is needed to create a better learning environment

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Confusion at Witherspoon voting

◆ Disappointment, confusion mars Witherspoon voting experience.

Donna Myers
Correspondent

The onslaught of signs at Precinct 01-23 voting polls at N.C. State's Witherspoon Student Center waned on Election Day by 6:30 p.m. Twelve hours deep into an Election Day that is a capstone to a tight presidential race, the only visible sign for a candidate outside of Witherspoon was Republican ag commissioner Steve Troxler's.

The polls were much less serene. A hefty line of young people waited to be

cleared to vote.

"This process is a pain in the neck," moaned Time-Warner Cable customer service representative Jenell Ephran. Ephran, 26, believes campus voting could be more organized. "It discourages students; they don't know where to vote," she said. "If they try to register in their district, they come here tonight and get turned away," said Ephran as she pointed out a common occurrence at Witherspoon.

Others admit they're partly responsible for the confusion.

"I was lazy when I moved [to North Raleigh], I did not re-register," said Donald Gaye, 21. "Now I'm waiting to

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Election a thrill for Republicans, Democrats

◆ With a series of close and historic races, North Carolina voters eagerly awaited election results.

Kathy Wilhelm
Correspondent

After eight years in the presidential wilderness, local Republicans could almost smell the land of milk and honey just over the last hill. Campaign fatigue forgotten, they converged on the downtown Raleigh Sheraton Tuesday eager for a victory party.

Betty Joe Shepherd, 48, a lifelong Republican, was ready to celebrate.

"I can't see how anyone from a tobacco state could vote for Gore," she said.

Dressed in blue denim covered with pins and stickers for various candidates and wearing a belt cinched with two gold elephants, she looked at the early returns showing Bush with an early lead. "This



Republicans react to the elections.

is nerve-racking." It was going to be a long night.

The convention room upstairs at the Sheraton was lined with red, white and blue balloons. A Bush-Cheney poster backed the dais at one side of the room, where Republican Party Chairman Bill Cobey was welcoming the crowd. At the other side of the room the television cameras were lined up, backed by blind-

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Etheridge wins second term

◆ North Carolina's 2nd congressional district seat went to Democrat Bob Etheridge for his third term.

Brynn Dutton
Correspondent

The winner of the North Carolina 2nd congressional District was incumbent Bob Etheridge, going into his third term in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Commonly known as the only tobacco farmer in the House, Etheridge previously voted against the Balanced Budget Act because it contained a cigarette tax increase. He also refused to sign a trade bill with China until the bill supporter dropped a 12-year ban on importing U.S. tobacco.

Etheridge, 59, is a native of North Carolina, where he was

educated in the public school system, became a businessman, part-time farmer and political activist.

As the former state superintendent of schools, he used his seat primarily for educational and agriculture endorsements. During his first two terms, few bills were passed bearing his name because he tried to represent the diverse views of his district.

After his election, Etheridge plans to use the same independence in approving legislation that affects his district. His first priorities after his election include protecting farm families, strengthening Social Security and Medicare for seniors and paying down the national debt.

According to results at 9:13 p.m. Tuesday night, Etheridge led with 65.7 percent, Mark Haynes with 33.6 percent, and

Jackson with 0.8 percent.

The Republican opponent, Haynes, 41, of Rocky Mount, is also a supporter of education reform, agriculture, reducing the national debt and protecting Social Security and Medicare programs.

Haynes, however, strongly support promoting the environment, rebuilding the military and affirmative action programs.

The Libertarian opponent, Mark Jackson, 45, of Sanford, lost his fourth attempt for gaining a seat in the House. Jackson supports returning power to the individuals to prioritize their personal lives and resources.

He hoped to eliminate Social Security, federal income taxes, U.S. foreign aid, federal regulations on trade, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

Price defeats Ward

◆ Democratic incumbent David Price defeated Republican challenger Jess Ward for North Carolina's 4th Congressional District House seat.

Mark L. Harrison
Correspondent

With Democratic incumbent David Price the apparent winner on Tuesday evening, it appears that the 4th Congressional District House seat will remain under his control.

Price held a consistent 10 percent advantage over Republican challenger Jess Ward at 9 p.m. and appeared to have his office easily locked.

Even though Price was heavily favored to win this election, some did feel that Ward should be considered a dark horse in this election. Libertarian C. Brian Toney was also running, but played no major factor in last night's election. Price has always been confident in this office and has demonstrated that ever since 1986 when he first took office in the House of Representatives.

Price, always a supporter for a stronger N.C. educational system, emphasized the importance of education as one of his top priorities. Price told the *News & Observer* Voters Guide that



David Price won another term Tuesday evening.

North Carolina needs to reduce class size so that elementary students are more likely to succeed in the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. "We need to recruit and hire more well-trained teachers and support the construction of new facilities," Price said.

Furthermore, Price already has already made moves to support his educational stance. He wrote and passed the Price Education Affordability Act, which made interest on student loans tax-deductible and allows penalty-free withdrawals from Individual Retirement Accounts, thus allowing individuals to pay for higher level education.

Price began his college career

at Mars Hill College and as a junior transferred to UNC-Chapel Hill, where he received his bachelor's degree. He continued his education by attending Yale University and receiving a bachelor's degree in divinity and a Ph.D. in political science.

Price has taught political science and public policy since 1973 at Duke University. Price was elected to Congress in 1986 and he has served for more than 11 years in the House of Representatives serving on two of the most influential committees: Appropriations and Budget. Price has been married for 32 years to Lisa Price, and they have two children, Karen and Michael.

Easley polls were right

◆ Polls running since August accurately predicted the gubernatorial victory of Democratic candidate Mike Easley.

Catherine Taylor
Correspondent

The results of the North Carolina Governor's election are in, and Mike Easley has been declared the winner — but did this result reflect what the polls have been saying?

There are many methods people use to predict election results. Some say that if a certain football team loses the Saturday before the election, the current president or vice-president will lose as well.

Halloween mask makers believe that the presidential candidate who sells the most masks in his image will be the next president of America. As there are no Halloween masks of Mike Easley or Richard Vinroot (are there?) we should probably just look at the polls to see who they pre-

dicted would be the next governor of North Carolina.

The Eyewitness News Flash Polls have been predicting a victory for Easley since August. In August they predicted that Easley would triumph with a large margin, 53 percent of the vote to Vinroot's 38 percent.

But, like the presidential election polls, the Democratic candidate's lead was slipping. On September 19 Easley's lead had slipped to 51 percent. Vinroot too had lost votes, he was given 37 per-

cent. The Libertarian candidate, Barbara Howe had entered the polls with a 6 percent share of the vote. By October 23, Vinroot had managed to climb up in the polls, gaining 45 percent of the vote. Howe slipped slightly and lost two percent, and Easley's fall continued. He was still in the lead but had only 49 percent. On Monday, Oct. 30, Easley had again lost points; he had only 46 percent of the vote. Vinroot had stayed on 45 percent and Howe had gained 1 percent.

Most other polls have shown similar results to that of the Eye Witness News Polls. Polls conducted for *The News and Observer* and television station WRAL have shown similar results, with Easley having a double figure lead in August and then slipping to almost equal figure with Vinroot.

The WRAL poll gave Easley a larger lead in the polls on October 21. His poll numbers were 50 percent, Vinroot's was 37 percent and Howe had 1 per cent.

According to this poll Easley was leading in every section of the state except in Charlotte, Vinroot's home town.

Were the polls correct or would it have been better to see how many Halloween masks were sold? Well, Easley defeated Vinroot with 51 percent of the votes compared to 48 percent. Howe only received point five percent. The most accurate poll was the WRAL poll of October 21.

WITHERSPOON

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make sure I can vote." Gaye, along with others, sat and wondered whether they would even be able to vote. Others in line were unsure if they were properly registered or if they were even at the correct voting poll.

"I definitely think it could go a lot smoother. I was confused at first," said Derek Wilson, a 20-year-old, voting for his first time. Wilson used the extra time on his hands to make last-minute decisions. "The candidates I support, [George] Bush, [Ralph] Nader and [Richard] Vinroot, I support for economic reasons," he said. As he moved forward in the line, he decided on Bush.

"I'm independent with a slant towards the Democrats," said Gaye. My true vote is with Nader, but I'll vote for Gore, I can't let Bush win. The campaign issues are not as important to Gaye as candidate conduct. "I don't listen to candidates, regardless of promises, they can't get it, regardless of what they want."

Independently employed Internet marketer, Daniel Zacharias, supported Bush and let the other North Carolina Republican candidates ride the presidential candidate's coattails. "I don't really care about Vinroot, I really just voted for Bush, the others just came with the package." The Bush views that Zacharias supported were

partial birth abortion ban, Christian views and gun control. "Bush came out and said that 'Jesus Christ significantly influenced my life'," Zacharias said.

"Gore never said what he was," When it came to bonds, Zacharias also expressed strong convictions. "I did not vote for the public school bonds because I don't understand why I have to pay 55 percent of my taxes to public schools when my son is in private schools." Zacharias quipped, "These North Carolina schools are 47th in the nation, they did not challenge Tony [Zacharias' son] at all, they taught him reading in second grade."

Eddreda Watkins, a NCSU graduate student in education, supported the university bonds. "I hope they will give more scholarships so more students can attend college," Watkins said. "When they get there, I hope the bond will allow them to sit in a historic building that's been restored, not falling apart," she said.

Watkins pointed out that the presidential candidates did not appeal to the younger voters, whom she called the future. "We are the future, I don't know why they didn't focus on implementing and doing things that affect us," Watkins said, "their focus was adults."

As the Precinct 01-23 polls closed at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, many young people walked away with a little disappointment. "I didn't get to vote," was all one student said as he walked away.

GOVERNOR

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In the environmental arena, Easley supported tying state road funds to local government decisions regarding mass transit and urban sprawl. He supported extending a ban on new hog farms and mandating a reduction of emissions from coal-fired plants.

Vinroot called transportation policy a local affair and opposed a ban on new hog farms and new regulations on utilities.

In health care, Easley supported prescription drug coverage for seniors and legal liability against managed care companies. Vinroot argued that such policies would raise health care costs. He supported George W.

Bush's plan of creating a medical savings account which would allow employers to place tax-free funds into an account and let workers make health care choices.

Steven Decillis is an assistant district attorney from Oxford. He coordinated Easley's campaign in Franklin, Granville, Vance and Warren counties along with District Attorney David Waters.

As the evening drew to a close, Decillis reflected on what an Easley victory will mean for the people of North Carolina.

"He fought for people as district attorney," said Decillis. "He fought for people as attorney general. Now, the sky's the limit in North Carolina. He'll lead North Carolina into the 21st Century. There is no better man to do it."

things effectively," said Fang, smiling. "This is the bottom line."

Select Legislature Committee was named and toured the UNC system, recommending a referendum decide the bond issue. The General Assembly announced the referendum on May 18, assuring the bond's place on North Carolina's ballots.

And Engineering's place in the repair line-up. "It will be a tremendous step forward for the College of Engineering," said the college's dean, Nino Masnari. "It's critical for our future."

BOND

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for the students. The two phases of the project for the College of Engineering include a new 132,000-square-foot building on Centennial Campus where the computer science and electrical engineering departments will be moved.

The current engineering buildings will be repaired and modernized.

"The issue for this university, really the purpose, is for the students to be able to learn

THRILL

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ingly bright lights.

Cobey thanked the workers for "as good an effort as we have ever had" and noted the millions that local Republican loyalists such as former U.S. Senator Lauch Faircloth had raised in this election.

For a while it seemed that there were more press people in the room than Republicans, but by 9 p.m., it started filling up. People clustered around the big screen television in one corner watching NBC, while smaller television screens scattered around the room carried other channels. Lieutenant-Governor candidate Betsy Cochrane made an early appearance, surrounded by cameras and reporters as she greeted friends and supporters.

Not all the partygoers were Republican workers. Rusty Games of Craven County was in town for a Parks and Recreation meeting and couldn't resist the party. He said that he "was not feeling very confident" about the results.

The main event between Vice President Al Gore and Governor George W. Bush, was still undecided at press time, although Bush handled tough North Carolina. The groans when Florida was called for Gore early on were matched by the loud cheers when Tennessee, and later Wyoming, went for Bush. The loudest groans, however, were reserved

for Hillary Clinton's projected win in the New York Senate race.

There were plenty of close fights in addition to the presidential race. The Democrats needed to win seven seats to take control of the U.S. House of Representatives, with two North Carolina Republicans — Robin Hayes and Charles Taylor — in jeopardy. The Republicans needed seven seats to take the state House — a necessity if they hoped to participate in next year's redistricting.

The local candidates appeared reluctant to comment as the early returns came in. Jess Ward, trailing David Price for U.S. District 4 in early returns, said that he would have no comment until later.

Doug McCulloch, candidate for the Court of Appeals, took encouragement from the fact that the Council of State races were close — "the closer the better" — for those further down the ballot. He was unhappy with the early national results. Commenting on Gore's win in Michigan, he said that there were "400,000 union workers with nothing to do but haul people to the polls."

By 10 p.m. the room was packed, but most of the candidates had still to make an appearance. With few races decided, George Jones summed up the hopes of the crowd.

"It looks like we may be able to pull the national race out."