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Pittsburgh Voters Reject Extremism in Resounding Primary Wins for Beacon-Backed Candidates and Ballot Measures

PITTSBURGH, PA — Pittsburgh voters delivered a clear message in Tuesday's primary: they want leaders who reject extremism, embrace pluralism, and focus on the real work of governing.

Corey O'Connor's upset victory over incumbent Mayor Ed Gainey headlines a night of sweeping wins for Beacon PAC–endorsed candidates and Beacon-supported ballot measures. Beacon PAC-backed candidates won five of six contested races, with one still too close to call. Voters also overwhelmingly approved both Beacon-supported ballot questions to prevent the misuse of city processes by extremist special interests and to strengthen anti-discrimination protections.

"More than 100,000 Pittsburghers saw Beacon's voter education materials this election, and our volunteers knocked on thousands of doors of likely voters" said Jeremy Kazzaz, Executive Director of the Beacon Coalition. "That kind of reach demonstrates that when voters have real information, they choose leaders who prioritize inclusion, good governance, and respect for every community."

The primary marks a pivotal shift in Pittsburgh's political direction, as voters rejected a wave of ideological extremism that has divided the city. Beacon's grassroots campaign was centered in the 14th Ward, where our efforts helped drive a major surge in voter turnout. In 2021, former Mayor Bill Peduto carried the ward by just 750 votes. This year, Corey O'Connor won it by 3,325—a dramatic swing that underscores the power of informed engagement.

“This was a win for unity, pragmatism, and good governance,” said Lauren Baldel, a Beacon volunteer. “It shows that when voters are informed, they choose leaders who bring people together—not those who divide.”

Beacon Coalition will continue its work to educate voters, build coalitions, and hold elected officials accountable to values that make Pittsburgh stronger: pluralism, democracy, and equal protection for all.

About Beacon Coalition

Beacon Coalition is a non-partisan 501(c)(4) organization dedicated to protecting the rights and well-being of Jews in the United States. The Beacon Coalition Political Action Fund empowers candidates whose documented words and actions reflect shared values. Through advocacy, education, and grassroots mobilization, Beacon works to reverse the rising normalization of anti-pluralist and anti-democratic ideologies in American politics.

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