

“Civic Duty” by Audrey Royall: The Cavalier Volume 38 Issue 2 December 2018

The United States’ midterm elections were held on November 6, 2018. As per usual, all of the seats for the House of Representatives were up for election, along with 35 seats for the Senate. South Carolina’s governor seat was also open, leading to a race between Republican Henry McMaster, who was seeking reelection, and Democrat James Smith.

Top party leaders endorsed the candidates: President Donald Trump held a rally at Airport High School on June 25, 2018 to support McMaster.

On the other side, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders came to the Koger Center on October 20th, 2018 to speak at a rally organized by Our Revolution SC, a liberal group who endorsed Smith. McMaster went on to win the election, receiving 54% of the popular votes. In addition, both Democrats and Republicans retain control of their respective South Carolina House of Representatives seats, except for the South Carolina 1st Congressional District Spot, which was flipped to Democrat. Nationally, the Democrats gained the majority in the House while Republicans held the majority in the Senate.

United States government teacher Mrs. Shannon Mooney suggested that this was a normal occurrence. “Usually in the midterms one or both [legislations] in Congress will flip to the opposite party of the president...we flip flop back and forth,” she said.

Topics such as civic duty and voter turnout were raised in the buildup to the elections. “Voting is the cornerstone of Democracy,” senior William Bobadilla said. “You can’t complain unless you’ve voted.” Senior Dazmen Seawright-Adams said that she learned that she has a say in the government through the process of voting.

The attention given to the midterms has been viewed as an increase from past years. “I don’t know if the numbers will reflect increased voter turnout, but definitely the attention put on the midterms was pretty incredible,” Mooney said. “Usually they are thrown by the wayside, nobody thinks about the midterms; they only care about the presidential election.”

Bobadilla said that teachers at Richland Northeast inspired him to go vote. “Through the course of [government] studies I realized how important it to exercise your constitutional duties,” he said.

Mooney said that the emphasis on exercising civic duty was intentional. “If they don’t know how to participate, if they don’t know what that means, how can we expect them to be successful adults?” she asked.