= Baltimore mayoral election , 1999 =

On November 2 , 1999 , the city of Baltimore , Maryland , elected a new mayor , the 47th in the city 's history . Primary elections were held to determine the nominees for the Democratic Party and Republican Party on September 14 . Incumbent mayor Kurt Schmoke , a Democrat , opted not to run for reelection . Martin O 'Malley , a member of the Baltimore City Council , won the election to succeed Schmoke .

Because Baltimore 's electorate is overwhelmingly Democratic , whoever won the Democratic primary election was seen as the favorite over the Republican nominee in the general election . Baltimore 's large African American population initially made it seem likely that the next mayor would also be African American . Kweisi Mfume was the preferred candidate of local politicians , but he opted not to run . Though Carl Stokes and Lawrence Bell , members of the City Council , declared for the race , local leaders were underwhelmed with the quality of declared candidates .

In 1999 , Baltimore experienced high rates of murder and unemployment , and had a failing city school system . O 'Malley declared his candidacy , focusing his campaign on a " zero tolerance " approach to crime . He received endorsements from many of the city 's African American leaders . After a close race , O 'Malley overtook both Stokes and Bell to win the Democratic nomination , which all but assured him of victory in the general election . He defeated Republican candidate David F. Tufaro in the general election by an overwhelming majority .

= = Background = =

Kurt Schmoke , the incumbent Mayor of Baltimore , was serving his third term . He announced in December 1998 that he would not run for reelection the following year , the first time an incumbent Baltimore mayor did not run for reelection since 1971 . Schmoke was the first African American mayor in Baltimore 's history .

Racial politics had long played a role in Baltimore . As the state of Maryland did not attempt to prevent African Americans from voting through Jim Crow laws , political coalitions often involved African American community leaders . Theodore McKeldin , who served as mayor from 1943 through 1947 and from 1963 through 1967 , was one of the first political leaders to work with African American community leaders . By 1999 , 63 % of Baltimore 's registered voters were African American , and 90 % were registered to the Democratic Party . Baltimore had not elected a Republican mayor since 1963 .

As of 1999 , Baltimore experienced 300 murders a year , which was the fourth most in the nation . Unemployment was 9 % , twice the national average . Between 1990 and 1998 , Baltimore saw its population decrease by 12 @.@ 3 % , the second @-@ biggest decrease during that time period in the United States . This decrease led to its work force decreasing by one @-@ sixth . The city saw decreases in heavy @-@ manufacturing by 40 percent , distribution jobs by 35 percent , retail positions by 34 percent , and banking jobs by 28 percent . Also , the state of Maryland had taken over the city 's failing school system in 1996 , which upset African American politicians . State Senator Clarence M. Mitchell , IV called the takeover racist . Baltimore City Council members , including President Lawrence Bell and Martin O 'Malley , had opposed the handling of Baltimore 's high crime rate by Schmoke and Baltimore Police Department (BPD) Commissioner Thomas C. Frazier .

= = Candidates = =

= = = Democrats = = =

Bell was considered in February 1999 to be the front @-@ runner in the mayoral race . Other potential candidates included State 's Attorney Patricia Jessamy , former City Councilman Carl Stokes , City Comptroller Joan Pratt , and Joan Carter Conway , a member of the Maryland State

Senate .

City leaders , including Howard P. Rawlings , a member of the Maryland House of Delegates , and William Donald Schaefer , the Comptroller of Maryland and Schmoke 's predecessor as mayor , feared that none of the potential candidates had the vision to continue the urban renewal that took place under Schmoke and Schaefer . They hoped that Baltimore @-@ native Kweisi Mfume , the president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) , would run . Mfume had previously served on the Baltimore City Council and in the United States House of Representatives . Schmoke called the race " his to lose " . However , Mfume lived in nearby Catonsville , Maryland , and did not move into Baltimore until March , which would leave him short of the one year residency requirement .

The state legislature passed a law shortening the residency requirement from one year to six months , which was signed into law by Democratic Governor Parris Glendening in April . Bell attempted to have the legislation overturned . The City Council , with Schmoke 's support considered raising the salary of the mayor in April , to make the position more enticing to Mfume . Also , 200 Baltimore citizens , including three former mayors , attempted to draft Mfume into the race . However , Mfume had signed a five @-@ year contract with the NAACP in 1996 . Mfume considered leaving the NAACP to run , but in May , decided to remain with the organization .

Stokes announced his candidacy in December 1998 . Bell announced his candidacy two days after Mfume passed on running , in May 1999 , promising to tackle crime and improve public safety . Community leaders who attempted to draft Mfume into the race began to back Stokes . Other declared candidates included Mary Conaway , the City Register of Wills , activists A. Robert Kaufman , Robert Marsili , and Phillip Brown . Jessamy stated that without Mfume in the race , she would consider running , but she opted against getting into the race .

A June 1999 poll conducted by Gonzales / Arscott Communications Inc . , a polling firm based in Annapolis , Maryland , showed Schaefer ahead of Bell . Schaefer stated that he had no interest in running , and threw his support behind Bishop Robinson , the former BPD Commissioner . Robinson chose not to run .

O 'Malley initially supported Bell 's candidacy . Bell urged O 'Malley to endorse him , and offered him the job of city solicitor in exchange for his support . However , O 'Malley began to distance himself from Bell , not appearing at Bell 's campaign announcement , due to disagreements on several bills debated at the City Council . Bell 's supporters attempted to convince O 'Malley to run for City Council President , but O 'Malley announced his decision to run for mayor in June , becoming the first major candidate in the race who was Caucasian . He began the campaign largely unknown outside of Northeast Baltimore .

= = = Republicans = = =

On July 1 , David F. Tufaro , a real estate developer and lawyer from Roland Park , Maryland , announced his intention to run for the Republican Party nomination , joining three neighborhood activists who had already declared their intentions to run . Carl Adair , a public school teacher who had run unsuccessfully for the City Council and the Maryland House of Delegates on numerous occasions , was also a candidate for the Republican nomination .

Republican Party officials quickly began to back Tufaro , who criticized the Democratic Party by pointing out that Democrats have led Baltimore in its decline .

= = Campaign = =

Fifteen candidates ended up running in the Democratic primary . The front @-@ runners were considered to be O 'Malley , Bell , and Stokes . Schmoke made no endorsement in the race .

O 'Malley and Bell called for " zero tolerance " to all crime , though Stokes felt this policy was biased against minorities . Stokes ran on the issue of education , as he was a former member of the Baltimore school board , in addition to the city council . Stokes vowed to reduce class sizes and reverse the trend of citizens of Baltimore leaving the city to live in nearby suburbs .

O 'Malley faced initial difficulties based on race , as a community leader stated that his entrance into the race " created some tension , " and that O 'Malley 's potential victory " would be the worst thing that could happen in this city " and could " tear this city apart . " Some saw his entrance in the race as an attempt to split the African American vote . However , O 'Malley received endorsements from prominent African American politicians in August , including Rawlings , fellow state Delegate Kenneth Montague , and Conway . Rawlings credited O 'Malley 's " track record of empowering black Americans . " He also received an endorsement from Schaefer . Some African Americans charged Rawlings with " stabbing us in the back " over the endorsement .

Bell attempted to portray himself as the heir apparent to Schmoke . However , disclosures from a lawsuit revealed Bell 's financial troubles , which included having his car repossessed . Bell lost support after he stated that voters should choose him because " I look like you . " Stokes began to lose support after he was charged with lying about having a college degree , when it was discovered that he did not graduate from Loyola University Maryland , as his campaign literature stated . It was also revealed that Stokes settled an income tax lien . Bell 's supporters rallied outside the offices of The Baltimore Sun , challenging that they were writing negative stories about African American candidates , and giving better treatment to O 'Malley during the campaign . Stokes was able to recover support when he received endorsements from The Baltimore Sun , the Baltimore Afro @-@ American , and the ministerial alliance .

Bell led Stokes in a poll conducted early in the race , 33 % to 17 % , before O 'Malley declared his candidacy . By late August , Bell slipped in the polls to third place , with O 'Malley and Stokes tied . Bell and O 'Malley began airing television commercials supporting their campaigns in early August , while Stokes did not begin to air commercials until September . O 'Malley also advertised on the radio .

Seven candidates , including Democrats Bell , Stokes , O 'Malley , and Conaway , and Republicans Adair , Tufaro , and Arthur Cuffie Jr . , met for a debate on September 8 . The debate focused on crime , with Bell , Stokes , and O 'Malley making their cases regarding " zero tolerance " , while Adair and Tufaro declared their support for Frazier .

= = Results = =

= = = Democratic primary = = =

The Democratic primary was held on September 14 . Turnout was high ; though the mayoral candidates expected about 100 @,@ 000 voters , about half of Baltimore 's 294 @,@ 000 registered voters voted in the primary elections .

O 'Malley won the primary election with more than 50 % of the vote , though he received only 30 % of the African American vote . Bell and Stokes split a significant portion of the city 's black majority , but their combined total was less than O 'Malley . At his victory rally , O 'Malley called the election " a victory for diversity and a victory for inclusiveness " .

= = = Republican primary = = =

In the September 14 Republican primary , Tufaro received over half of the votes cast . Adair finished in second place .

= = = General election = = =

Despite the odds he faced in the general election , Tufaro promised to campaign against O 'Malley , not taking defeat as an inevitability . He pointed to Bret Schundler , the mayor of Jersey City , New Jersey , as evidence that a Republican could be elected in a heavily Democratic city . Schundler came to Baltimore to campaign for Tufaro .

Regarding public housing , Tufaro called for renovations rather than demolishing vacant buildings ,

which drew criticism , as Housing Commissioner Daniel P. Henson III pointed out that renovating was more expensive than demolishing . O 'Malley promised to enforce provisions of the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 , which require banks to invest in poor neighborhoods . Tufaro further proposed a plan for school vouchers and to drug test students , which drew opposition from the Baltimore Teachers Union and from O 'Malley , who favored expanding pre @-@ kindergarten and after @-@ school programs , while making summer school mandatory . When discussing the problem of HIV / AIDS in Baltimore , which disproportionately affects African Americans , both O 'Malley and Tufaro promised to continue the city 's needle exchange program .

Tufaro criticized O 'Malley 's zero tolerance policy , suggesting it would lead to increased police brutality towards minorities . He instead proposed continuing Mayor Schmoke 's community policing strategy . Opponents of the zero tolerance policy tried to tie O 'Malley to the Baltimore Police shooting of an African American car theft suspect .

WMAR @-@ TV conducted the only poll of the general election with SurveyUSA , which showed O 'Malley leading with 87 % of the vote . On Election Day , O 'Malley easily defeated Tufaro in the general election , receiving over 90 % of the vote .

= = Aftermath = =

= = = O 'Malley 's political career = = =

Following his election , O 'Malley 's first personnel decision was to retain the director of the city 's economic development agency . O 'Malley had his transition team , and had them compile policy drafts by mid @-@ December , so they would be ready to compete for state funds when the Maryland State Legislature reconvened on January 12 , 2000 . He participated in the Newly Elected Mayors Program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government in mid @-@ November . By the beginning of December , he named five deputy mayors and filled most of his cabinet . He finalized his cabinet on December 7 , during his last session as a city councillor . He was sworn in as mayor later that day at the War Memorial Plaza , near Baltimore City Hall .

In his first year in office , O 'Malley adopted a statistics @-@ based crime tracking system called CitiStat , modeled after Compstat . The system logged every call for service into a database for analysis . The Washington Post wrote in 2006 that Baltimore 's " homicide rate remains stubbornly high and its public school test scores disappointingly low . But CitiStat has saved an estimated $ 350 million and helped generate the city 's first budget surplus in years . " In 2004 , CitiStat accountability tool won Harvard University 's " Innovations in American Government " award . The system garnered interest from Washington , D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty , as well as crime officials from the United Kingdom .

O 'Malley considered a run for Governor of Maryland in the 2002 election , but decided not to run . He was reelected as Mayor of Baltimore in 2003 , and announced his candidacy for Governor in the 2006 election . The Baltimore Sun endorsed O 'Malley , saying : " When he was first elected mayor in 1999 , the former two @-@ term city councilman inherited a city of rising crime , failing schools , and shrinking economic prospects . He was able to reverse course in all of these areas . " The Washington Post criticized O 'Malley for " not solv [ing] the problems of rampant crime and rough schools in Baltimore " , but further said that " he put a dent in them . " . O 'Malley defeated incumbent Governor Bob Ehrlich 53 % -46 % in the November 7 , 2006 , general election . O 'Malley defeated Ehrlich in the 2010 election 56 % -42 % , receiving just over one million votes .

O 'Malley was ineligible to run in the 2014 gubernatorial election due to term limits . O 'Malley publicly expressed interest in a presidential run in 2016 on multiple occasions . At a press conference at a National Governors Association meeting , O 'Malley stated he was laying " the framework " for a presidential run .

= = = Depiction on The Wire = = =

A fictionalized version of the events of this election were presented in third and fourth seasons of The Wire , a drama about crime and politics in Baltimore , which aired in 2004 and 2006 , respectively . Many saw the connection between O 'Malley and the character of Tommy Carcetti , a Caucasian Baltimore City Councillor who is elected mayor in an election against two African American opponents . Carlos Watson of MSNBC once introduced O 'Malley as " one of the real @-@ life inspirations for the mayor of the hit TV show The Wire " , to which O 'Malley responded that he was instead the show 's " antidote " .

Show creator David Simon denied that the character of Tommy Carcetti was supposed to be O 'Malley , though he did acknowledge that O 'Malley was " one of several inspirations " for Carcetti . He further stated that while Carcetti was " reflective " of O 'Malley , Carcetti was a composite drawing aspects from other local politicians that he had covered when he worked as a reporter for The Baltimore Sun .