

= Vermont gubernatorial election , 2014 =

The 2014 Vermont gubernatorial election took place on November 4 , 2014 , to elect the Governor of Vermont , concurrently with elections to the United States Senate in other states and elections to the United States House of Representatives and various state and local elections . Incumbent Democratic Governor Peter Shumlin ran for re @-@ election to a third term in office against Republican businessman Scott Milne , Libertarian businessman Dan Feliciano and several other minor party and independent candidates .

Based on election polling , Shumlin 's large financial advantage and the state 's strong Democratic lean , Shumlin was expected to win easily , but he received only a plurality , not a majority , of the vote and polled only 2 @,@ 434 votes more than Milne out of 193 @,@ 087 cast . The Constitution of Vermont requires that the 180 @-@ member Vermont General Assembly choose the winner when no candidate receives over 50 % of the popular vote . On January 8 , 2015 , the Assembly chose Shumlin over Milne by a vote of 110 to 69 , with one abstention .

The result prompted much debate and analysis among commentators and the political parties . It took place among the 2014 U.S. elections , which saw Republicans make sweeping gains in federal , state and local offices across the country . In the nearby Democratic states of Maryland and Massachusetts , Republicans won unexpected gubernatorial victories . On June 8 , 2015 , Shumlin announced that he would not seek re @-@ election in 2016 .

= = Background = =

Four @-@ term Republican Governor Jim Douglas did not run for re @-@ election in 2010 . In the race to succeed him , Democratic nominee Peter Shumlin , the President Pro Tempore of the Vermont Senate , received 49 @.@ 5 % of the vote while Republican nominee Lieutenant Governor Brian Dubie received 47 @.@ 7 % . As neither candidate received a majority , the General Assembly was required to pick the winner in January 2011 . Dubie did not contest the vote ; he conceded the race on election night and called for Vermont to " unite " around Shumlin . Shumlin won the Assembly vote 145 to 28 , with 7 legislators not voting .

Shumlin was re @-@ elected in 2012 against Republican State Senator and former Vermont Auditor of Accounts Randy Brock by a landslide , 57 @.@ 8 % to 37 @.@ 6 % .

Vermont and New Hampshire are the only states in the country whose governors are elected every two years . An incumbent governor of Vermont has not been defeated for re @-@ election since 1962 , when Democrat Philip H. Hoff beat Republican F. Ray Keyser , Jr. by 1 @,@ 315 votes .

= = Democratic primary = =

Shumlin announced in December 2013 that he was running for re @-@ election to a third term in office , but said that he would not begin campaigning until after Labor Day 2014 , just two months before the election . He faced one opponent in the Democratic primary on August 26 : lifelong Republican and Washington , D.C. resident H. Brooke Paige , who simultaneously ran against Democratic incumbent William Sorrell in the Democratic primary election for Vermont Attorney General . Paige was also unsuccessful in that effort , losing by 80 % to 20 % .

= = = Candidates = = =

= = = Declared = = =

H. Brooke Paige , former CEO of Remington News Service and Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate in 2012 (also ran for Attorney General)

Peter Shumlin , incumbent Governor

== Results ==

== Republican primary ==

The Republicans initially struggled to recruit a candidate . Former Governor Douglas and Lieutenant Governor Phillip Scott announced early on that they would not run and it was not until March 2014 that a candidate entered the race : marijuana legalization activist and former Independent gubernatorial candidate Emily Peyton . This spurred Republicans to recruit a serious candidate , but they struggled to do so . Former Wall Street banker Bruce Lisman announced in May 2014 that he was not running , and attention turned to former State Senator and 2012 nominee Randy Brock , State Representative Heidi Scheuermann and businessman Scott Milne .

In May , Scheuermann said that she would not run , leaving the party with a month until the June 12 filing deadline to find a candidate . Milne , who was traveling in Africa , announced that he would decide shortly before the deadline . Brock was urged to run and considered doing so , but revealed on June 8 that he would not . On the morning of filing deadline day , Milne announced that he would run . He was joined in the Republican primary by Peyton and retired marketer and self @-@ described " modern @-@ day Mark Twain " Steve Berry . Also running but not appearing on the ballot was Dan Feliciano , who ran as a write @-@ in candidate for the Republican nomination and was uncontested for the Libertarian nomination . In the August 26 primary , Milne was nominated with over 70 % of the vote .

== Candidates ==

== Declared ==

Steve Berry , retired marketer

Dan Feliciano , businessman and Independent candidate for Governor in 2010 (write @-@ in ; also ran as a Libertarian)

Scott Milne , businessman , candidate for the State House in 2006 and son of former State Legislators Don and Marion Milne

Emily Peyton , Independent candidate for Governor in 2010 and 2012 (also ran as an Independent)

== Declined ==

Randy Brock , former State Senator , former Vermont Auditor of Accounts and nominee for Governor in 2012

Jim Douglas , former Governor

Bruce Lisman , banker

Heidi Scheuermann , State Representative

Phillip Scott , Lieutenant Governor of Vermont (ran for re @-@ election)

== Results ==

== Progressive primary ==

Satisfied with his support for single @-@ payer health care and his efforts to close Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant , the Vermont Progressive Party had not run a candidate against Shumlin in 2010 or 2012 . Its members discussed challenging him in 2014 because of his proposed cuts to social programs , but the party openly admitted that it lacked the money for a gubernatorial

campaign , and no candidate came forward to run .

== Candidates ==

==== Declined ====

Martha Abbott , former party Chairwoman

Emma Mulvaney @-@ Stanak , party Chairwoman and former Burlington City Councilor

Anthony Pollina , State Senator and former party Chairman

== Results ==

== Liberty Union primary ==

Peter Diamondstone , who co @-@ founded the Liberty Union Party and has run for elected office almost two dozen times , was unopposed .

== Candidates ==

==== Declared ====

Peter Diamondstone , party co @-@ founder and perennial candidate

== Results ==

== Libertarian nomination ==

Feliciano , a businessman who also ran as a write @-@ in candidate in the Republican primary , was unopposed for the Libertarian nomination .

== Candidates ==

==== Declared ====

Dan Feliciano , businessman and Independent candidate for Governor in 2010 (also ran as a write @-@ in in the Republican primary)

== Independent ==

== Candidates ==

==== Declared ====

Cris Ericson , perennial candidate (also ran for Vermont 's at @-@ large congressional district)

Bernard Peters

Emily Peyton , Independent candidate for Governor in 2010 and 2012 (also ran in the Republican

primary)

===== Declined =====

Bruce Lismann , banker

===== General election =====

===== Debates =====

A general election debate , attended by party nominees Shumlin , Milne , Diamondstone and Feliciano and Independent candidates Ericson , Peters and Peyton , was held on October 9 . It attracted considerable media attention and was described variously as " funny " , " strange " , " crazy " , " one of the strangest of this election cycle " , " very , very special " and " beard @-@ filled " . Comments by all of the candidates apart from Shumlin drew media attention and laughter from the studio audience , such as Milne describing himself as " third @-@ generation , born in Vermont " , only to correct himself and state that he was born in Brooklyn ; Ericson , who sported a large bow @-@ topped hat , suggesting that poor Vermonters use their food stamps to buy lottery tickets and decrying " chemtrails " ; Diamondstone , who wore jean shorts with suspenders and long socks and sported a large beard , calling for revolutionary socialism , the legalisation of all drugs and secession from the union , as well as comparing students to " slaves " because of the cost of higher education and responding to a question about the Department of Children and Families by railing against the U.S. military and the " Zionist regime " ; Peters answering a question about the affordability of college in Vermont by saying that he had " no idea " ; and self @-@ described " light worker " Peyton shouting at Shumlin for allegedly closing highway restrooms and using her closing remarks to ask Vermonters if they 'd rather choose money or love .

Additional debates among the candidates were held , which also drew attention . Former Governor Howard Dean described the debates as a " good thing for the state " and Time magazine 's Denver Nicks called them a " breath of fresh air " and " pure entertainment " . There was a final debate on October 29 with just the top three candidates : Shumlin , Milne and Feliciano .

===== Polling =====

===== Results =====

===== Results by district =====

Of Vermont 's 275 " polling places " that report results separately ? corresponding to the state 's 255 towns and cities , with some larger municipalities broken into multiple precincts ? Milne won a plurality in 162 precincts , or 58 @.@ 9 % . Shumlin won 112 , or 40 @.@ 7 % , and they were tied in one other . Shumlin won the state 's biggest voting area , Burlington (representing 9 @, @ 604 gubernatorial voters) , by a margin of 66 % to 23 % . Of the state 's 10 largest municipalities , Shumlin also won South Burlington , Bennington , Montpelier , Hartford and Middlebury . Milne won Essex , Colchester , Rutland City , Williston and Barre Town . Of Vermont 's 13 multi @-@ member Senate districts , aligning roughly with the state 's 14 counties , Milne won eight (61 @.@ 5 %) and Shumlin five (38 @.@ 5 %) . Milne won the popular vote in 53 House districts ; Shumlin won in 51 .

===== Analysis =====

As no candidate received a majority of the vote , the Vermont General Assembly was required to decide the election , choosing among the top three vote @-@ getters , Shumlin , Milne and Feliciano . The result came as a surprise to most observers , who had expected Shumlin to win easily . RealClearPolitics rated the race " Likely Democratic " and The Cook Political Report , Daily Kos Elections , Governing , The Rothenberg Political Report and Sabato 's Crystal Ball all rated the race " Safe Democratic " . RealClearPolitics reported an average lead in the polls of 15 @. @ 2 % for Shumlin and HuffPost Pollster 's model estimated Shumlin would beat Milne 51 @. @ 1 % to 37 % with the probability that Shumlin would win the election at 95 % .

Analyzing the results , The Burlington Free Press pointed to Shumlin 's relatively soft numbers in opinion polls ? he was in the mid @-@ 40s in the last four polls of the race ? as evidence that voters were dissatisfied with the progress the state had made in instituting single @-@ payer health care , with rising property taxes , and with the unsuccessful roll @-@ out of Vermont Health Connect , the state 's federal health care exchange . Shumlin 's internal polls showed a close race and he touted an endorsement from popular U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy to try and put him over 50 % . By comparison , Milne lagged in fundraising and spending , with just \$ 100 @, @ 000 available compared to Shumlin 's \$ 1 @. @ 1 million , which meant that he could not even afford to pay for polling .

The presence of Libertarian nominee Dan Feliciano on the ballot divided opinion , with Milne and former Republican Governor Jim Douglas saying that he split the anti @-@ Shumlin vote . By contrast , the Free Press said that Feliciano was likely to have drawn many voters dissatisfied with Shumlin but who would not have otherwise have voted for Milne . Feliciano agreed with this assessment , saying that he was " not a spoiler " . Republicans wondered whether they should have done more to push Feliciano out , whether Milne should have run more strongly against single @-@ payer , whether 2012 nominee and former State Auditor Randy Brock should have run again , and whether the state party should have been less focused on state legislative races .

Analysis by political experts pointed to the record low voter turnout ? around 43 @. @ 6 % ? and the fact that 39 @, @ 000 more people voted for Democratic Congressman Peter Welch than voted for Shumlin as a sign of dissatisfaction with Shumlin . University of Vermont political science professor Garrison Nelson said that " the people who showed up are the angry ones " and that , unlike Shumlin , " Welch demonstrated an appeal far beyond just the Democratic base . "

In a news conference on November 12 , Shumlin stated that the result was " humbling " and said that he would " listen , learn , reflect [and] be more inclusive . " He also pledged to move ahead with single @-@ payer health care and to address school spending , property taxes and the \$ 100m budget gap .

= = General Assembly vote = =

Since 1853 , the General Assembly has selected the first @-@ place finisher in every gubernatorial election that has come before it , most recently in 2010 , when Shumlin received 49 @. @ 5 % of the vote and was chosen over Republican Brian Dubie , and in 2002 , when the Democratic @-@ controlled legislature picked Republican Jim Douglas , who had received 44 @. @ 9 % , over Democrat Doug Racine , who received 42 @. @ 4 % . The Assembly most recently reversed a plurality vote in the 1976 lieutenant gubernatorial election , when the Republican @-@ controlled legislature picked Republican T. Garry Buckley rather than Democrat John Alden , who was suspected , and later convicted , of insurance fraud .

Although the second @-@ place finisher usually concedes the race , as happened in 2002 and 2010 , Milne refused to concede . He considered requesting a recount , but did not do so , reasoning that it was " extremely unlikely , almost unfathomable , that a recount would put either candidate above the 50 percent mark . " Before the election , Milne said that if Shumlin won a plurality , he would support him and would expect Shumlin to do the same if the situation were reversed . After the election , however , he said , " it 's clear that 54 % of Vermonters want a new governor , and a new path forward . "

As 91 votes are needed to elect the Governor from the 180 @-@ member body and Democrats and

Progressives held 112 seats , it was considered unlikely that Milne would win . Milne argued that legislators should decide the election in line with how their individual districts voted . Neal Goswami of the Vermont Press Bureau calculated that if each legislator voted according to the results in their district , the vote would result in a 90 ? 90 tie . Milne disagreed with this calculation and claimed voting according to district outcome would result in his winning 93 ? 87 .

Republican legislative leaders said that they would not whip their members to vote for Shumlin , leaving them free to vote their consciences . Though Republican Lieutenant Governor Phillip Scott did not have a vote , he said that he would vote for Shumlin , and Republican State Representative Kurt Wright said that he would do so . Initially , no Democrats indicated that they would vote for Milne . Indeed , several Democrats whose districts voted for Milne over Shumlin said that they would vote for Shumlin , citing his plurality win .

For almost a month , Milne made no further comment as he considered whether to lobby for legislators ' votes . Former Governor Douglas cautioned Milne against waging a legislative campaign for Governor , saying that it was " unlikely " to be an effective strategy and that Milne should seek to preserve the " good will that he has accrued " and " acknowledge the result and come back and fight another day . "

Then , on December 8 , Milne held a press conference in which he defied suggestions that he would concede by officially announcing that he was asking state legislators to vote for him . He went on to say that he would not be " pro @-@ actively " trying to convince legislators to vote for him , nor would he start " twisting arms " , but that his " door is open " and called on legislators to " consider the record of the incumbent " and what was " best " for Vermont . Shumlin responded that he was " honored to have received the most votes in this election and would not want to serve as governor if I did not . " He went on to say that he believed that " the Legislature will honor the long democratic tradition of electing the candidate who received the most votes . "

After Milne 's announcement , Independent State Representative Paul Poirier , a liberal whose district voted for Milne by a 2 @-@ to @-@ 1 margin , announced that he would vote for Milne . One Democrat , State Representative Jim Condon , said that he would vote for Milne , also citing his district 's support for Milne over Shumlin . Political science professors Eric Davis and Garrison Nelson and House Minority Leader Don Turner expected the General Assembly vote to roughly follow party lines , with Milne receiving about one @-@ third of the votes , including most of the Republicans and a few Democrats and Independents .

On December 17 , Shumlin announced that he was dropping his plan to implement single @-@ payer healthcare . The reforms , which required business and personal tax increases , had never advanced beyond the framework stage . Shumlin , who had missed two earlier financing deadlines , said that " this is not the right time " because the federal government had offered less funding than expected and " the potential economic disruption and risks would be too great to small businesses , working families and the state 's economy . " The media also cited controversy surrounding comments made by economist Jonathan Gruber , who was involved in crafting and advocating for the plan , and Shumlin 's failure to win a majority in the election as reasons for the cancellation . The decision , which Shumlin called the " biggest disappointment " of his career , drew a mixed response . Business groups lauded his " pragmatic " move but supporters of health care reform organized protests and said that it would end his political career .

At the end of December , the newly formed group " Vermonters for Honest Government " raised \$ 30 @,@ 000 to air television advertisements aimed at pressuring legislators to vote for Milne . The group 's founder , retired United States Navy Captain Bill Round , said that legislators should vote against Shumlin because " he 's promised a lot and failed to deliver . " Round did not reveal the source of the group 's funding . Milne said that while he had no connection to the group , he appreciated the sentiment . By contrast , Shumlin said that he would " absolutely not " run any advertisements , nor would he campaign for legislators ' votes or spend any money . He added that he was " not worried " about the vote .

In early January , Milne reiterated that he was not actively campaigning for legislators ' votes but said that he felt that his odds of victory were " getting better on a weekly basis , if not a daily basis . " Shumlin said that if Milne were to win , Vermont would be " paralyzed " , as the new administration

lacked the time needed to assemble a new staff and draft a budget for the 2016 fiscal year . He also offered his support for amending the state constitution so that as long as a plurality winner received at least 40 % of the vote , the Assembly would not be required to decide the election .

On January 8 , the General Assembly voted to re @-@ elect Shumlin by 110 votes to 69 , with one legislator not voting . Shumlin stated that he was " grateful for the opportunity to continue serving this state I love . I expect this will be a productive session addressing the issues Vermonters care about so deeply . " Milne said that it was " a good day for Vermont ... I was happy to be a part of it . I think the road that 's led us here has a lot of people feeling like one person can make a difference . " Milne did not rule out running again in 2016 .

= = = Results = = =

= = Aftermath = =

On June 8 , 2015 , Shumlin announced that he would not run for a fourth term in 2016 . He said that he had " never seen politics as a lifelong career " and " decided to make this decision now because I want these next 18 months to be about the work that we still have to do . " He said that his decision was " not driven by poll numbers ; [nor] driven by politics " and that after leaving office in January 2017 , he would return to his family business in Putney .

Several candidates have announced their intention to run : for the Democrats , former State Senator and 2010 gubernatorial candidate Matt Dunne , former Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Transportation and former State Representative Sue Minter and Speaker of the Vermont House of Representatives Shap Smith ; for the Republicans , retired banker Bruce Lisman and Lieutenant Governor Phil Scott . Milne is not running again . After saying that he was " unlikely " to run when Scott entered the race , it was later reported that he " would only get in the governor 's race if Scott was to falter . " Milne later clarified that he expected Scott to win the nomination and , in September 2015 , officially endorsed him . Libertarian nominee Dan Feliciano , who joined the Republican Party in mid @-@ January 2015 , is considering running for the Republican nomination .