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Final Project Write-Up: Story and Justifications

As a traditionally Democratic-leaning state with a Republican governor, Maryland is home to a peculiar mix of political leanings and circumstances. This unique status makes Maryland an interesting test-case with which to gauge both state and national politics at a convenient scale. This analysis followed the campaigns of former President Donald Trump and current Governor of Maryland Larry Hogan and sought to evaluate how each candidate performed in each of their elections in the state of Maryland. The goal was to highlight some of success and failures of each and provide evidence to argue for who would better represent the contemporary Republican Party as it stands today.

On the poster, two sets of maps show the Vote Percentage for each candidate by county in each of the elections (from 2016 to 2020 for Presidential, and 2014 to 2018 for Gubernatorial) in a dual choropleth and the Size of Victory or the difference in votes between candidates by county with proportional symbols. These helped to determine individual performance in different geographic areas with varying demographics and to illustrate who won overall and by what margins. A second section of the poster contains the outcomes of each election along with state-wide popular votes and total vote percentages. The third section provides assessments of each election along with the differences between them and their ramifications. A final section shows both Donald Trump and Larry Hogan and gives a brief summary paragraph of their record and legacy to be interpreted for suitability.

The data used in the maps and poster were election result reports gathered and tabulated from *Politico*, *The New York Times*, and *Wikipedia*. Percentages were used for the first maps starting from 40% and up to create a dual visualization of vote percentage by county and by candidate. Increments of 10% in 5 classes for each candidate covered the data range for each dataset and were most practical. For the second maps, a difference in vote totals for each candidate was calculated, then the proportional symbols were assigned a color with the following conditional statement: `CASE WHEN "difference" > 0 THEN 2 ELSE 1 END`. The sizes were then determined based on the absolute value of the differences. For color scheme, a minimalist white and grey scheme was used for the poster, along with a patriotic red and blue divergent palette to mimic party colors. The maps borrowed from a diverging 9-class red-blue color palette from ColorBrewer for discernibility. The fonts used are PT Sans, for good readability along with some added style. In general, the maps are unfortunately sized relatively small due to the need to visualize eight separately along with adequate space for additional data and interpretation.

In the end, the poster intends to demonstrate how Larry Hogan's extraordinary success as a Republican Governor in Maryland should serve as a role model for future candidates in the Republican Party. In addition, Hogan's high approval ratings among all partisan groups and his record of pragmatic decision-making and moderate centrist attitudes should stand as a guiding example for candidates and politicians on either side of the political spectrum. In contrast, Donald Trump appears to exemplify many characteristics that the Republican Party should strive to distance itself from. His failures in Maryland and worsening performance overtime highlight how polarizing and insensitive politics serve only to exclude and erode popular support.