



ELECTIONS

## Miami Mayor Francis Suarez reelected in a landslide victory

BY JOEY FLECHAS

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Miami Mayor Francis Suarez addressed supporters after winning reelection on Nov. 2, 2021, handily defeating lesser-known opponents to earn his second four-year term.

BY PROVIDED BY: REELECT FRANCIS SUAREZ FOR CITY OF MIAMI MAYOR



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Miami Mayor Francis Suarez won reelection Tuesday night, handily defeating lesser-known opponents to earn his second four-year term as the figurehead of South Florida's most populous city — and position himself to look beyond Miami's boundaries.

Before Election Day, Suarez captured about 79% of the mail ballots and early votes, building a giant lead before polls opened Tuesday. Suarez's reelection was so anticipated that fans and supporters at his election party on the Miami River barely noticed when a big screen projecting results at his election party showed the mayor ahead of his second-place opponent by more than 13,000 votes.

With such a large lead, and a low Election Day turnout, by 7:30 p.m. Suarez had locked in a second term as Miami's 34th mayor — the first to be born in the Magic City and son of the city's first Cuban-born mayor, Xavier Suarez.

Suarez took the stage at The Wharf before 8 p.m. with his wife Gloria as the crowd roared in support. The mayor delivered a prepared victory speech that touched on local initiatives, such as the construction of the Underline and reducing homelessness. He also spoke about a commitment to create a local government model that can be scaled up and replicated across the U.S. — comments with undertones of a stump speech on the national campaign trail.

“Today we embark on a new chapter, a journey together to finish what we started, to create the most fair and successful city in our country,” Suarez said. “To create a model that can be scaled into an agenda for America, bringing prosperity and peace not only to Miami, but to this entire nation.”

The mayor's early evening victory speech capped a largely uncontested campaign that saw Suarez, a 44-year-old real estate attorney and private equity executive, shatter fundraising records and set a cosmopolitan tone for his second-term agenda. He raised more than \$6.5 million from a range of new donors — tech entrepreneurs and venture capitalists — as well as the typical real estate interests that fund local political campaigns.

In a year where Suarez was the subject of glowing magazine profiles and speculation that the youthful Republican mayor might have a future in national politics, the mayor's reelection campaign often took a backseat to his enthusiasm for cryptocurrency and his chats with high-profile Republicans.

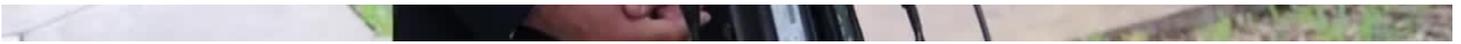
Suarez has steadily raised his national profile in the past two years, publicly breaking with Florida's Republican establishment on the state's response to the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic and using social media — along with the studio he created in his City Hall office — to market Miami as a top destination for burgeoning tech firms.

Suarez's supporters say he's built a good image for the Magic City, displayed leadership during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and successfully boosted Miami's tech brand.

"He's just bringing in tons of people into the city," said Istvan Zolcsak, a 29-year-old real estate professional who voted early for Suarez a week before Election Day. "He's doing an excellent job bringing in a lot of tech businesses."

His critics say, even if he was a shoo-in for reelection, Suarez should focus more on local, everyday City Hall issues.





Miami Mayor Francis Suarez addressed the media at a polling place in Coconut Grove on Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2021. BY [CARL JUSTE](#)

Some took aim at the mayor's decision to stay out of the limelight during most of the firing of former police chief Art Acevedo, a process that dragged out for weeks and several public hearings. Even though Suarez recruited Acevedo and touted him as the "Michael Jordan of police chiefs" upon his hire, the mayor largely avoided the controversy that surrounded Acevedo's ouster.

On Tuesday, Suarez said sometimes he's chosen to work more behind the scenes, a decision that has kept him distanced from the parochial fights between city commissioners. In public office since 2009, Suarez was first elected mayor in 2017 after nearly a decade as a commissioner.

Suarez still has millions left in political committees that supported his mayoral campaign. His most recent campaign finance reports show that he's only spent a fraction of his war chest, leaving political watchers wondering about his next moves.

Before climbing back on stage with friends and family to chant "four more years," he told the Miami Herald now that his victory puts him in line to be the next president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and he considers his constituency to now extend beyond Miami city limits.

"I not only have to take care of each and every one of the residents of the city of Miami, but I also have to think about all the cities in America and how do we create prosperity for all those cities," he said.

Asked if he's already building a platform for a future run, he demurred.

"A former public official once told me that if you do the job that you have every single day to the best of your ability, the rest will take care of itself," he said.

A steady stream of supporters filled The Wharf as the night went on. The mayor's father told the Herald that earlier in the day he texted his son a John Winthrop quote: "As a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."

He reflected on his son's second term, now illuminated by the national and international spotlight.

"The eyes of the world are upon Miami," Xavier Suarez said. "And I wonder to myself, 'Are we that good?' Well, we have to be that good. The eyes of the world are upon us."

### MIAMI MAYOR

| CANDIDATE                | PERCENT | VOTES  |
|--------------------------|---------|--------|
| Anthony Melvin Dutrow    | 3.69%   | 1,009  |
| Marie Frantz Exantus     | 4.34%   | 1,187  |
| Max Martínez             | 11.59%  | 3,167  |
| Francisco 'Frank' Pichel | 1.76%   | 482    |
| Francis X. Suarez        | 78.61%  | 21,480 |

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[Source: Miami-Dade County](#)

This story was originally published November 2, 2021 7:50 PM.

