

# Wallace Support by By Blacks Appears

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MONTGOMERY, Ala.— Gov. George C. Wallace's black support in his landslide victory for a third term probably will not be as large as first reports of the election indicated.

Wallace crushed four opponents in the May 7 Democratic primary by winning two-thirds of the 750,000 votes cast and carrying all but one of the state's 67 counties. Even though the counties won by Wallace included the state's 10 predominantly black ones, a survey of black leaders shows most believe Wallace gained no more than 10 per cent of the black votes, not the 20 to 25 per cent estimated at first.

These black leaders discount the possibility that a drastic shift in black attitude toward Wallace has occurred.

But his increased tally among blacks probably represents a continued softening of racial attitudes.

Wallace has stopped his racist rhetoric and some black leaders have decided to vote for him in order to say later, "Okay, we helped you. Now help us."

Besides, many blacks felt there was no alternative. His closest opponent, Eugene McLain of Huntsville, was too weak a candidate to gain much black confidence.

Estimates are that just over half of the approximately 280,000 black voters cast ballots in the primary; many probably did not vote at all in the governor's race.

Joe Reed, chairman of the Alabama Democratic Conference, the black caucus of the state Democratic Party, he thinks Wallace got about 8 to 10 per cent of the vote. "But the maximum won't be more than 15 per cent," he added.

Reed said, for example, at the Carver High School ballot box in Montgomery, a 90 per cent black precinct, Wallace received about 10 per cent of the vote.

Two predominantly black polling places in Tuscaloosa

showed about the same support: At Stillman College McLain received 732 votes to Wallace's 155, and at Druid High School McLain received 745 votes to Wallace's 62.

Alvin Holmes, one of 13 blacks elected to the state legislature in last week's voting, said Wallace received from 5 to 6 per cent of the black vote in this west Montgomery district, which is 75 per cent black.

W. C. Patton, of Birmingham, former head of the Alabama NAACP, said he doesn't believe Wallace received even that much.

"Unless someone cites me figures from predominantly black boxes that say otherwise, I will not believe Wallace got a significant black vote.

"In fact, I would bet my neck it won't run 5 per cent statewide. I believe it will be closer to 1.5 to 2 per cent," said Patton, who is now national director of voter education for the NAACP. In 1970, Wallace received about 1 per cent of the black vote in his gubernatorial race.

Two black office holders who openly supported Wallace's re-election were Tuskegee Mayor Johnny Ford and Lowndes County Sheriff John Hulett.

Both denied they had been promised anything by Wallace in return for that support.

"I simply thought Wallace was the most qualified candidate," Ford said.

He said that with Wallace's national standing, Alabama will share in more and more of the nation's wealth.

Ford said he supported the re-election of Richard Nixon for the same pragmatic reasons in 1972. He said that because he once worked at the Justice Department's Community Relations Service, he knew there were programs available to aid communities such as his and wanted to win some through support of the administration.

Tuskegee is the seat of Macon County, the only county Wallace did not carry. But the governor received 39 per cent of the vote there, compared with 16 per cent in 1970. The County is 83 per cent black.

Hulett still retains his own black support despite backing Wallace.

The sheriff defeated four opponents by more than 1,000 votes in the primary when he ran for a second term.

Lowndes County, which is 70 per cent black, gave Wallace 1,654 votes; McLain, 865; and Sheriff Hulett, 2,754.