



WEEKLY UPDATE

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Tuesday's Primary Results

On Tuesday, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Oregon and Pennsylvania held their primaries ahead of the November general election. The elections showed that, even the candidates purportedly backed by the GOP establishment have been pulled so far to the right that it is a distinction without a difference. These extreme and out of touch Republican candidates will now face off against Democrats who are focused on commonsense solutions to grow the economy, create jobs, and expand opportunity for all.

See below for some of the GOP's coverage from the morning after Election Day:

Daily Beast: [Tea Party Loses Key Battles, But Is Winning The War](#)

"Last night represented a big win for the Tea Party's ultra-conservative ethos, and the extent to which Tea Party philosophy is now cemented into the GOP is now plain to see. ... The election results showed the ultimate success of the Tea Party's effort to change the very DNA of the GOP"

MSNBC: [As dust settles, there's 'not that big a difference' between GOP factions](#)

Tea Partiers can take solace in knowing they've already moved the GOP so far to the right that the larger conservative mission has already succeeded....The already conservative Republican Party has moved even further to the right, with the establishment candidates lining up quite nicely on the ideological scale with the more radical candidates of the very recent past."

Salon: [GOP establishment is officially dead: The real lesson of Tuesday night's primaries](#)

"No, the Republican establishment didn't 'win big' last night. The new reality is it doesn't even exist anymore...[All of the candidates have been on the far right](#), espousing essentially the same far-right views, while trying to best each other by pandering to cultural signals or attacking each other's past indiscretions, real or imagined."

TPM: [Georgia Isn't Out of the Teapot Just Yet](#)

"One of the two 'Establishment' candidates, Jack Kingston, ran a savagely ideological campaign that was on nearly every issue indistinguishable from a Tea Party crusade."

DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz wrote the op-ed below for Huffington Post on the topic. Read it on their website [here](#).

Tuesday's Tea Party Triumph

Huffington Post Opinion // DNC Chair Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz

Yesterday, Republican Speaker John Boehner admitted that "there's not that big a difference" between the Tea Party and the GOP. The results of last night's primaries are just the latest confirmation that this is true. The civil war in the Republican Party is over and the Tea Party has won.

I know that many will look at Tuesday's results and see that the so-called "establishment" candidates won. But if you look closely at their campaigns, you'll see that they have been pulled so far to the right by the Tea Party that it is a distinction without a difference.

Foremost was Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, who was challenged by political newcomer Matt Bevin. McConnell was never in legitimate danger from the inexperienced Bevin, especially once he moved to squeeze any path Bevin would have had to run to McConnell's right. McConnell's strategy is being guided by the same campaign manager who helped elect Kentucky's junior senator and Tea Party insurgent Rand Paul, so it is no surprise that the strategy consists of obstruction and opposition.

After spending roughly \$12 million to hold on to an historically low turnout Republican primary, he now faces a general election where mainstream Kentuckians are sick and tired of someone who is the embodiment of everything that's wrong with Washington. Notable is that Democratic nominee, Allison Lundergan Grimes received 100,000 more votes in the Democratic primary than McConnell received in his. Even former Kentucky Republican Senator Marlow Cook, who first hired McConnell, no longer recognizes the new Tea Party version of McConnell. Commenting on McConnell's opposition to the Affordable Care Act -- which is already benefitting Kentuckians -- Cook said, "I don't know what Mitch is doing."

In the Georgia Senate race, pundits are saying that the party advanced the establishment candidates. But only in a field including Paul Broun and Phil Gingrey would Jack Kingston ever be considered "establishment." According to the National Journal vote ratings, Kingston was more conservative than about 96 percent of the House of Representatives, and he scored 93 percent on Americans United for

Change's Tea Party Scorecard. Over the last few months, David Perdue and Kingston have touted their conservative credentials against a candidate who supported Todd Akin, a candidate who called evolution "lies straight from the pit of Hell," and a candidate who used her position at a breast cancer charity to cut off funding for women's health services provided through Planned Parenthood. Now, they face a long, divisive runoff that will drag them even further to the right.

Perhaps it is easiest to see the truth of Boehner's statement in those candidates who are openly backed by both the GOP establishment and the Tea Party. Tom Cotton's support of raising Medicare's eligibility age and gutting Social Security, and opposition to the Violence Against Women Act and equal pay, has endeared him to a wide swath of Republicans. Cotton's unpopular policies pale in comparison to a dedicated public servant committed to middle class families who shares Arkansans' priorities like Senator Mark Pryor.

Tea Party backed candidates may have lost recent battles for Republican nominations, but by forcing the Republican Party to adopt their extreme policy positions and radical rhetoric, they have won the war. As John Boehner said, "there's not that big a difference."

The Democratic Party is focused on ensuring economic security for middle class families and providing opportunity for all, not just a select few. With the Republican Party's competing factions united behind an agenda that is obsessed with repealing health care reform and conducting politically charged investigations, the choice for voters in November will be that much more clear -- a Republican party that puts politics before people or a Democratic party that is working to create jobs and grow our economy.

In the States

- On Tuesday, the Iowa Democratic Party released a new video on the GOP's U.S. Senate Field. In the last debate, none of the GOP's 5 candidates supported raising the minimum wage to help hundreds of thousands of Iowans. Watch the video [here](#).
- On Thursday, the Florida Democratic Party pushed back on Ellyn Bogdanoff's comments that she will only run for State Senate if "it's truly a winnable district." FDP put out a release saying, "That is exactly the kind of selfish political gamesmanship South Florida voters have come to expect from Bogdanoff, whose time in Tallahassee was spent pursuing a partisan agenda that enriched wealthy special interests while hurting middle class families." Read their full statement [here](#).
- On Thursday, Iowa Democratic Party Chair Scott Brennan released a statement following the GOP U.S. Senate debate on healthcare. He said, "As today's GOP debate made crystal clear, when you pull back the curtains from the Republicans' Tea Party talking points, all you find are obstructionist tactics, misleading statements, and a lack of any common sense solutions. Republicans today offered no plan beyond taking coverage away from more than 150,000 Iowans and sending us back to the days when insurance companies could deny care because of pre-existing conditions and women were charged more for insurance simply because of their gender. Plus, for all their talk about health care "choice," Joni Ernst and her Republican rivals have no problem supporting an out-of-touch personhood amendment that would limit access to birth control and criminalize abortions—even in the case of rape or incest. Iowans deserve a U.S. Senator committed to ensuring every person in this state can access quality and affordable health care, not an extreme obstructionist without any substance to back up their one-line policy positions." Read the statement [here](#).

Corbett and Perry: Embracing Extremism on Women's Health

As the general election in the Pennsylvania Governor's race begins in earnest, Tom Corbett should be running to the middle in hopes of gaining support from growing demographic groups like Latinos, African Americans and – perhaps critically – women in the Keystone State.

Instead, he is fully embracing his extreme record by launching his campaign at a rally with fellow tea party Governor Rick Perry.

Maybe we shouldn't be surprised. Tom Corbett and Rick Perry both have a long, embarrassing record of restricting and offending women specifically with their extreme agendas.

Tom Corbett has consistently attacked a woman's right to make her own health care decisions.

- After he backed legislation requiring not only that women get mandatory ultrasounds but that the ultrasound screen be in the woman's line of sight, Tom Corbett told the women he was planning to force to undergo these medically unnecessary procedures to ["just close your eyes"](#) if they didn't like it.
- Corbett also [signed legislation](#) prohibiting Pennsylvania women from being able to purchase health care plans that cover abortion through the Affordable Care Act's insurance marketplace– even if women paid for the coverage themselves.
- And Corbett [supports allowing employers](#) to have a say in women's health care decisions, including whether to provide contraceptive coverage.

Similarly, Rick Perry has shared a commitment to extremism on women's health.

- Perry [supports a constitutional personhood amendment](#) that would completely ban women's right to choose.
- He signed legislation [requiring a women to wait for a period of time he deemed sufficient](#) before being able to access their right to choose.
- And he signed legislation that would limit women's right to choose, restricts certain medications and mandates medically unnecessary regulations ["designed to prevent doctors from practicing medicine and shutter clinics."](#)

These extreme policies and offensive comments help explain why [more than half of Pennsylvania women do not](#) believe Corbett deserves to be reelected.

By appearing with Rick Perry, Tom Corbett is doubling down on the extreme agenda he has pushed in Harrisburg. Women voters in Pennsylvania know how out of touch Corbett is with their values, and that's yet another reason why Tom Wolf is poised to defeat Corbett in November.

Harvey Milk Stamp Dedication

On Thursday, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz joined members of Congress and US officials at the White House to help dedicate the Harvey Milk Forever stamp in his honor.

As the White House blog on the day explains, "Harvey Milk was a visionary leader who became one of the first openly gay elected officials in the U.S. when he won a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977. Milk's achievements gave hope and confidence to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community in the United States and elsewhere at a time when the community was encountering widespread hostility and discrimination. Milk believed that government should represent all citizens, ensuring equality and providing needed services."



To commemorate the day, DNC Chair Wasserman Schultz wrote a tribute in the Washington Blade.

In the piece she said, "Today, Harvey Milk takes his rightful place among America's civil rights pioneers, joining Martin Luther King, Jr., Medgar Evers, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and César Chávez among the civil rights icons formally recognized by the United States Postal Service to adorn a postage stamp. It is an opportunity to recognize his contributions in the fight to end discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity once and for all."

Read the Chair's full piece [here](#).

Chris Christie and Rick Scott: This is the GOP model?

On Thursday, [Chris Christie was in Florida](#) to campaign with Republican Governor Rick Scott – where they tried to tout their economic records.

But what do Christie's and Scott's records actually look like?

Under Chris Christie, New Jersey's credit rating has been downgraded a record-matching six times. His state has recovered less than half the private-sector jobs lost during the recession, and property taxes in New Jersey are the highest in the nation. Under Christie, New Jersey has an \$800 million budget shortfall, and his "solution" is to break a promise to New Jersey workers to the tune of \$2.4 billion – likely hurting the state's long-term economic prospects even more. New Jersey maintains one of the highest unemployment rates in the region and [recently passed Florida](#) to claim the mantle of the nation's highest share of foreclosures.

But falling from the top spot in foreclosures is no victory for Scott in Florida. Look no further than the Miami Herald to sum up Rick Scott's problem: "[Many Promises, Few Jobs.](#)" When he campaigned for governor in 2010, Scott promised to create 700,000 jobs – but he's coming up short. Scott spent hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars in incentives in an attempt to create jobs, but – [according to the Miami Herald](#) – "96 percent of the jobs have yet to materialize."

Don't expect Chris Christie and Rick Scott to live up to their tired rhetoric that Republican governors know how to get the job done. Instead, we're likely to hear more meaningless platitudes about Republican "leadership" and deflection on their own disastrous economic records. That's not leadership – it's just more of the same failed rhetoric that matches their failed records.