

Primaries bring good news for Trump and Republicans, bad news for divided Democrats

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Which state primaries to watch as midterms approach?

GOP pollster Justin Wallin discusses the races to keep an eye on.

Primaries Tuesday [showed](#) the power of President Trump's endorsements continued to help Republican candidates triumph, while House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., lost a key lieutenant – Rep. Joe Crowley – in a New York City race that suggests internal divisions among Democrats are more serious than people might think.

In addition, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, the 2012 GOP presidential nominee who lost to President Obama, staged a political comeback by easily winning the Republican nomination for a U.S. Senate seat in Utah held by the retiring Republican Orrin Hatch. Romney seems headed for victory in November in the heavily Republican state.

Democratic divisions between the leftist insurgents who backed Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont in his unsuccessful campaign against Hillary Clinton for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016 make it less likely that a big, blue wave is coming that will sweep Democrats to majority control in the House and Senate.

The insurgents have the potential to change the Democratic Party over the long term into something more in line with left-leaning parties in Europe, rather than continuing to remain within the uniquely American spectrum where both parties agree to one

degree or another that market forces should continue to play a role in setting economic policy.

President Trump's job approval numbers are holding steady somewhere in the mid-40s. The percentage of voters who feel the country is on the right track is now up near 40 percent – double where it was at the beginning of the year.

The only way this feels like it's a "change election" is on the Democratic side, where younger voters and women seemed determined to "Bernie-fy" the party and have it stand for such things as rolling back the Trump tax cuts, free college for all, Medicare for all and – in essence – a transformation of the United States into a full-blown version of a European-style welfare state.

That pitch might work in the big cities, which seem to be the only power base the party of the Clintons and Obama has left. But it's not clear that voters in the suburbs and rural areas will vote for candidates on the far left.

And, thanks to the recent outburst from liberal entertainers and U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters – who has urged those on the left to harass Trump administration officials wherever they might be found – the Democrats may be in the process of losing whatever advantage they might have had on the civility question. That might actually be one place where President Trump is truly vulnerable.

In New York City, voters in 56-year-old Democratic Rep. Crowley's Queens congressional district tossed him out in favor Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a 28-year-old former Bernie Sanders organizer. Ocasio-Cortez represents both a generational and ideological shift in one of the city's more moderate boroughs.

The defeat of Crowley, the chairman of the House Democratic Caucus and a potential successor to Pelosi, suggests the divisions between the older liberals currently running the party and young insurgents who transferred their allegiance from President Obama to Bernie Sanders in 2016 may be deeper and more permanent than many analysts believed. That spells bad news for Democrats in the November election.

In addition to the surprise defeat of Crowley in New York, a closely watched race in the state saw the winner of a House Republican primary on New York City's Staten Island helped by an endorsement from President Trump. Rep. Dan Donovan, who had the president's backing, defeated former GOP Rep. Michael Grimm. Grimm's campaign – claiming his conviction on tax fraud charges that forced his resignation from Congress was the result of a kind of "deep state" conspiracy – proved unpersuasive.

In New York's 24th Congressional District near Syracuse, Democrats nominated Syracuse University Professor Dana Balter as their candidate against Republican Rep. John Katko. While New York Republicans are thought to be an endangered species, Katko – who won re-election to second term in 2016 with 61 percent of the

vote – is the only one occupying a district carried by Hillary Clinton in the presidential election.

In other primary results:

UTAH

Romney's nomination is interesting, as pundits – at least those on the GOP side – say he's running to become the voice of opposition to Trump from within the party. That would mean taking over the role now played by Arizona Republican Senators Jeff Flake, who is retiring after a single term, and John McCain, who is battling brain cancer.

Even if that's true, that's a dubious proposition. Romney was never as intrinsically popular among Republicans who supported him as Trump is among his supporters.

Any love the Republican rank and file felt for Romney was based on his winning the nomination to go up against President Obama, whom Republicans greatly desired to see beaten.

The former Massachusetts governor may think he has some kind of moral authority that can act as a temporizer to President Trump's excesses, but that's only if his audience is the New York Times, CNN and the rich elites who accepted him as one of their own in a way they will never accept Trump.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Republican South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster, who was endorsed by President Trump, turned back a challenge from businessman and first-time candidate John Warren to win the GOP nomination for governor in a runoff.

McMaster – who was lieutenant governor until he replaced Gov. Nikki Haley when she became America's U.N. ambassador – was one of the first statewide elected officials anywhere in America to endorse Donald Trump for president. The president repaid the favor by traveling to the state for a last-minute "get out the vote" rally for McMaster Monday night.

MARYLAND

In Maryland, former NAACP President Ben Jealous defeated Prince George's County Executive Rushern Baker and will face GOP Gov. Larry Hogan in the fall. Jealous promised to run a Sanders-like campaign against the popular Hogan, who the polls indicate is an early favorite for re-election. This makes him something of a rarity in the heavily Democratic state.

In the contest for U.S. Senate in Maryland, incumbent Democrat Ben Cardin easily won re-nomination against six opponents, including Chelsea Manning, a former U.S. Army soldier convicted of leaking sensitive information and later pardoned by President Obama after serving seven years of a 35-year sentence.

MISSISSIPPI

In Mississippi, Democrat David Baria emerged from the runoff as the winner for the right to take on Republican incumbent U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker in the November election in something akin to a quixotic challenge.

In the state's 3rd Congressional District, Republican Michael Guest defeated Whit Hughes in the runoff for the seat held by retiring GOP U.S. Rep. Greg Harper.

COLORADO

In Colorado, progressive Democratic multi-millionaire Jared Polis and Republican Walker Stapleton, a member of the Bush political dynasty, will face off against one another in the race for governor.

In the race for Polis' open congressional seat the Democrats nominated attorney Joe Neguse, whose campaign relied heavily on his life story – he is the son of African refugees – to make a personal connection with voters.

In the state's 6th Congressional District, conservative GOP Rep. Doug Lamborn beat back four challengers to win renomination for a seventh term representing the residents of Colorado Springs and its environs.

OKLAHOMA

In Oklahoma, Republican former Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett and former state Attorney General Drew Edmondson emerged from a multi-candidate field to win their respective party nominations for governor.

In the heavily Republican 1st Congressional District in Tulsa, the GOP's Tim Harris won the nomination in the race to follow former Rep. Jim Bridenstine, now the NASA administrator, into Congress.

Overall, the primaries Tuesday saw few surprises – with the exception of Crowley's stunning upset – and saw no clear trends emerging save for the continued popularity of President Trump among Republicans in Republican areas.

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