



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on April 22, 2015

## Chaos in the Primaries

Painful as it is to realize that both the Democrats and the Republicans will still be holding their primaries a year from now, that is one of the high prices we pay for democracy.

Seldom does the initial “front-runner” in either party’s primaries end up being the actual candidate when election day rolls around. However, even if we cannot predict the outcomes of the primaries this far in advance, we can at least start trying to understand the candidates, the almost candidates and the people who are running just for the publicity.



One of the curious things this early in the process is that, while the Republicans’ three freshmen Senators — Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz and Rand Paul — have all had interviews on various television talk shows, veteran politician Hillary Clinton has been hiding out from real interviews by hard news reporters, as if she is afraid to be cross-examined.

This is by no means an irrational fear on Mrs. Clinton’s part. There are all sorts of questions that she would find hard to answer. They range from questions about recent events like the e-mails from her days as Secretary of State that she destroyed illegally, after Congress called for her to produce them, to the still unsolved mystery as to what she and Barack Obama were doing during the hours when four Americans, including our ambassador to Libya, were under attack by terrorists in Benghazi.

Then there are the bald-faced lies, such as Mrs. Clinton’s claim to have been shot at in a war zone, her claim that she and her husband were “poor” at the end of his terms as president, and her claim that charges of sexual misconduct against Bill Clinton in the White House were fictions invented by a “vast right-wing conspiracy.”

Supporters of Hillary Clinton tout her “experience” in high-level institutions of government — as first lady in the White House, as a Senator and as Secretary of State. But years of such “experience” raise the embarrassing question as to whether she ever actually accomplished anything in all those years, other than being physically present.

Among the many Republicans’ announced and unannounced candidates, three of the most prominent are freshmen Senators with no tangible accomplishments to go with their rhetoric. Whatever their potential, which seems especially striking in the case of Senator Marco Rubio, the White House is not the place for on-the-job training, in an age of international terrorism and nuclear bombs.

Barack Obama has already given us repeated demonstrations of what a mess a freshman Senator with rhetoric can make in the White House.

While there are a number of Republican candidates who can point to substantial accomplishments as governors, the fact that most have strong track records as conservatives means that they may well split the conservative vote so many ways in the primaries as to let the nomination go by default to a mushy



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moderate — of the sort beloved by the Republican establishment, but not by enough voters to beat even a weak or troubled Democrat on election day.

Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush is today's mushy moderate candidate who may well follow in the footsteps of a whole string of similar losers, from Mitt Romney and John McCain in recent elections, all the way back to Thomas E. Dewey, who managed to lose even in an election where three different Democrats were on the ballot, fragmenting that party's vote.

While the Republicans have several governors who would make good presidents, of whom Scott Walker and Bobby Jindal are the most prominent, that is very different from saying that these governors would make successful presidential candidates. How they handle themselves in the primaries can reveal that.

Former Governor Jeb Bush has lots of political savvy on his side — his own savvy and that of others — and a ton of money behind him. So he could end up being the last man standing after the many Republican conservatives knock each other off.

What could prevent that would be if each of the successive conservative Republican candidates who fall behind were to throw their support to whoever becomes the conservative candidate with the best chance of rescuing us all from another Clinton versus Bush election.

But we should never bet heavily on rationality prevailing in politics.

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