



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on November 4, 2009

Conservative Party's Hoffman Loses Plurality to Democrat Owens in NY Congressional Race

Democrats narrowly won a plurality in New York's 23rd Congressional District Tuesday, a District that hadn't been held by a Democrat in more than 100 years.

Democrat Bill Owens narrowly [defeated](#) Conservative Party nominee Doug Hoffman by a 49-45 percent plurality, where Republican nominee Dede Scozzafava had [withdrawn](#) from the race and endorsed the Democrat Owens days before the election.



OWENS

The District had become a national lightning rod for conservative unhappiness with the national Republican leadership for its persistence in picking liberal nominees that lose elections. Several nationally known Republicans had campaigned for Conservative Party nominee Doug Hoffman after Scozzafava's positions in favor of abortion, same-sex marriage, and fiscal liberalism became more widely known. Scozzafava had also been [endorsed](#) by ACORN's Working Families Party, the ultra-leftist founder of the DailyKos.com blog, NARAL, and the leftist teachers' union, NYSUT.

While the Conservative Party nominee Hoffman was hardly a traditional conservative noninterventionist on foreign policy issues, he had campaigned on a [platform](#) that pushed social conservatism and small government economics. As such, he drew the support of former House Majority Leader Dick Armey, Sarah Palin, and Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty.

Though the election was nominally a defeat for the Republican Party and the conservatives in it, some conservatives drew comfort from the election. Red State.com's Erick Erickson [explained](#) on his blog that the election means "the GOP now must recognize it will either lose without conservatives or will win with conservatives.... In 2008, many conservatives sat home instead of voting for John McCain. Now, in NY-23, conservatives rallied and destroyed the Republican candidate the establishment chose."

For its part, the national GOP leaders have charged to the head of the parade and are claiming to be leading it. "It sends a clear signal that voters have had enough of the president's liberal agenda," GOP National Chairman Michael Steele [told the press](#) after a Republican had emerged as the gubernatorial victor in Virginia. But Steele had been sent a similar message about his own party just a week earlier with Scozzafava. Despite Steele's protest on [CNN](#) on the eve of the election that "this was a local



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decision.... I don't pick candidates," Erickson [noted](#) that "despite the Beltway spin, we know for certain based on statements from the local Republican parties, that they chose Scozzafava based on advice from the Washington crowd."

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