



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on August 6, 2012

Establishment Balks as Tenn. Democrats Nominate Pro-life Conservative in Senate Race

The Tennessee Democratic Party has [officially rejected](#) its own nominee, [Mark Clayton](#), for the upcoming U.S. Senate race against incumbent Republican Sen. Bob Corker, citing the liberty-minded Democrat candidate's affiliation with a [pro-life group that defends the traditional definition of marriage](#). But despite a wave of vicious attacks by far-left ideologues, Clayton, who promised to strictly respect the Constitution, is already finding some tepid support for his candidacy among conservatives, Tea Party activists, and libertarians across the country — especially on social media.



As soon as news of his primary victory against six other candidates went viral, a massive smear campaign was launched to paint Clayton — a flooring installer — as too conservative to represent the Democratic establishment. Among the candidate's positions seized upon by hysterical critics: Clayton's opposition to the [NAFTA superhighway](#) aimed at further integrating the governments of North America, criticism of [“neo-conservative” war mongering](#), rejection of [unconstitutional national ID cards](#), and opposing what former presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton dubbed a [“new world order.”](#)

The 35-year-old candidate's open support for Christian values and the U.S. Constitution also drew fire from some opponents. One far-left critic even [compared](#) his views to positions held by [The John Birch Society](#), the liberty-minded constitutionalist organization dedicated to limiting government and preserving American sovereignty. Many analysts — perhaps prematurely — dismissed his candidacy out of hand.

The state Democratic Party that once fielded disgraced former Senator Al Gore quickly jumped on board the anti-Clayton bandwagon as well, releasing a [controversial statement](#) on its website disavowing the man chosen overwhelmingly by voters to run for the GOP-held seat in the upcoming Senate election. Clayton received about twice the amount of votes as his nearest competitor, taking about 30 percent of the total. Still, the will of voters notwithstanding, the Tennessee Democratic Party promised not to support his candidacy and to urge state Democrats to write in the names of other candidates.

“The only time that Clayton has voted in a Democratic primary was when he was voting for himself,” the state party [claimed](#), despite the fact that their candidate has consistently opposed establishment Republicans and ran as a Democrat in 2008. “Many Democrats in Tennessee knew nothing about any of the candidates in the race, so they voted for the person at the top of the ticket. Unfortunately, none of the other Democratic candidates were able to run the race needed to gain statewide visibility or support.”

In addition to implying that Democrats went to the polls and voted out of ignorance, the state party also



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alleged that the pro-life group [Public Advocate](#), where Clayton serves as an unpaid vice president, is somehow a “hate group.” Apparently the dubious characterization of the pro-life and pro-family group is based upon the ranting of a [discredited non-profit group](#) known as the “Southern Poverty Law Center” (SPLC). Clayton responded by pointing out that the Constitution of Tennessee defines marriage as between a man and a woman, “so if Public Advocate is a hate group, then the state of Tennessee is a hate group.”

Due to the hysterical attacks by officials within his party, the Clayton campaign is now demanding the resignation or firing of the state Democratic Party chairman for allegedly violating federal campaign laws by attacking a duly elected candidate with party funds. “We ask for his immediate dismissal or resignation,” [said](#) Clayton campaign spokesman Rick Simpkins. “If we don’t have that resignation by the end of business on Monday, we will be filing a complaint with the Federal Election Commission.”

The party responded by pointing out that the election results had not yet been “certified,” meaning that Clayton was still not officially nominated as the primary winner despite his landslide victory. “[State Democrat Party boss] Chip Forrester has broken no laws and will not be resigning,” the state party said in its response. But the looming showdown between Tennessee Democratic Party bosses and voters’ nominee is likely just getting started.

In a [statement](#) released on Friday, Public Advocate President Eugene Delgaudio slammed the Democrat Party establishment from Tennessee to Washington, saying it was in the midst of a “political collapse” as Clayton, a citizen volunteer with virtually no funds, managed to win the primary. “The liberal crybabies who whine about Mark Clayton’s total and complete democratic victory refuse to accept blame for their own failed policies,” Delgaudio declared in a statement. “Only a corrupt and desperate leadership would deny an underfunded Mark Clayton the common decency to represent the people of Tennessee in a free election.”

Delgaudio also blasted out-of-touch establishment Democrat Party officials for attacking the people of Tennessee as “stupid” simply due to their selection of a conservative patriot without insider political credentials. “President Obama and Mitt Romney could learn from Mark Clayton,” his statement continued. “Mark Clayton demonstrates the simple premise that an American patriot can put his or her name on the ballot and win big as a conservative even in the Democratic Party.”

Perhaps alarmed that a liberty-minded conservative Democrat would be running against Sen. Corker in what was considered a safe seat, the state GOP piled on against Clayton, too. It even adopted the Democrat Party line in implying that some 50,000 ignorant Tennessee voters did not know what they were doing when they cast their ballot to nominate an average citizen who supports the U.S. Constitution.

“What was once a Party with a national voice, the Tennessee Democratic Party, now finds itself in disarray with their struggle to nominate and field legitimate candidates,” state Republican Party Chairman Chris Devaney said in a statement. He did not explain why the Tennessee GOP did not consider Clayton to be a “legitimate” candidate, but critics of the response said it reflected the out-of-touch, condescending attitude increasingly displayed by establishment leaders in both major political parties.

The GOP may also be concerned about the fact that Sen. Corker’s record of obeying his oath of office to the U.S. Constitution is less than stellar — opening a potential line of attack for a constitutionalist opponent. According to the [Freedom Index](#), which tracks the voting records of members of Congress



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based on the Constitution, the Republican incumbent has upheld his oath less than two thirds of the time. He voted constitutionally a measly 62 percent of the time over the last 30 key votes.

More than a few analysts have also pointed out that, contrary to both state parties' claims and suggestions, many rank-and-file Democrats in Tennessee are deeply conservative — especially on social issues such as marriage and abortion. "Given the conservative nature of Tennesseans, some Democrats may have welcomed a candidate of Clayton's ilk; bet they are wondering even more about their party this week," [noted](#) a column in the *Tennessean* by one of the paper's editors. Indeed, Tennessee is one of the most conservative states in America.

Where the race goes from here remains to be seen, though most analysts still expect Sen. Corker to defeat his currently under-funded opponent without much trouble. With insurgent Tea Party and libertarian candidates [pummeling](#) establishment-backed insiders in key elections throughout the country, however, the battle in Tennessee could still prove to be an interesting spectacle. If nothing else, more than a few activists hope Clayton's stunning upset will prod the Democratic Party establishment into moving away from its [increasingly unpopular agenda](#).

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