

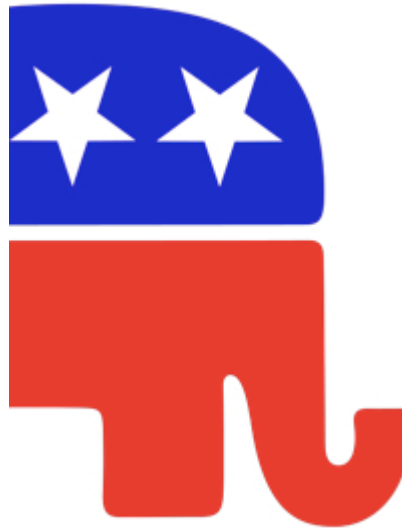


Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on April 19, 2010

GOP Promises to "Take Back New Hampshire"

Buoyed by the popular backlash against "ObamaCare" and polls showing strong support for GOP candidates, Republicans in the Granite State promised to "Take Back New Hampshire" Saturday as about 300 delegates gathered at Bow High School, just a few miles south of the state capitol in Concord.

"I think we are on the brink of a Republican resurgence the likes of which we have never seen," Republican National Committee member Phyllis Woods of Dover predicted at the party's annual meeting. Formal duties included the election of an assistant secretary, officer reports, and voting on a bylaw amendment, but the greater part of the meeting was spent in cheering on the party's candidates and hailing polls showing Republican challengers either leading or gaining on Democratic officeholders.



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The meeting came just one day after Gov. John Lynch announced he would seek an unprecedented fourth consecutive term in the corner office, and Republican Party Chairman John H. Sununu cited a recent Rasmussen poll pitting the Democratic governor against each of three Republican hopefuls. "All three of our candidates held John Lynch to 50 percent or less, which is doomsday for an incumbent governor," said Sununu, a former three-term New Hampshire governor and chief of staff to President George H. W. Bush.

The poll, conducted on April 7, showed Lynch still holding double-digit leads, however, with the nearest rival, former state Health and Human Services Commissioner John Stephen, trailing the governor, 47 to 37 percent, with five percent preferring another candidate and 11 percent undecided. The margin of error was 4.5 percent. Lynch led businessman Jack Kimball, 50 to 34 percent and conservative activist Karen Testerman, 50 to 33 percent. But Lynch, who unseated Republican Gov. Craig Benson in 2004 and scored landslide reelection victories over two relatively unknown Republican opponents, may be losing some of his popularity over tax hikes and substantial budget increases, followed by budget cuts and layoffs as the state struggles to close a \$200 million deficit by end of the current fiscal year on June 30.

"They literally hand over tax dollars to curry favor with every interest group around the state," Sununu said of the governor and the Democratically controlled legislature. "Then they pretend to go in and cut spending so they can sound like Republicans and get elected."

Taxing and spending were the dominant theme as the Republicans hammered away at Lynch and the Democrats over new taxes and fees implemented in the last two years, including a tax on camp ground



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rentals and the Limited Liability tax on businesses than don't qualify for either the Business Profits Tax or the Business Enterprise Tax. New Hampshire still has no general sales or state income tax, a distinction that is threatened by the current level of state spending, candidates warned.

"I'm here to fight for and to keep our New Hampshire advantage," said Testerman. "John Lynch does not understand that overregulation and over taxation cripples our businesses and destroys jobs."

"During his tenure, we have seen 80 tax and fee increases," said Stephen, who promised his agenda is "going to about cutting spending, cutting regulations and creating jobs." Kimball promised to repeal the Business Enterprise Tax and invoked the rhetoric of Ronald Reagan to liken the state as a "shining city on a hill."

"It's quite tarnished right now. But the good news is we're the landlords. We own that city and everything in it."

Abortion and other social issues went unmentioned by the candidates in a state where parental notification and other measure to limit access to abortion have been voted down by both Republican and Democratic legislatures over the years. Though it was a hot topic a year ago, none of the candidates mentioned the same-sex marriage bill passed by the legislature last year and signed into law by Gov. Lynch after he had previously said he was opposed to changing the law to grant marital status to same-sex couples. The New Jersey-based National Organization for Marriage has been running TV ads in New Hampshire saying "Lynch lied" about that, as well as on spending and budget cuts. Meeting with reporters last Wednesday Lynch said the out-of-state organization was "meddling" in New Hampshire politics.

"I'm disgusted and I think they should stay out," he said. Regarding state spending, Lynch said New Hampshire has the fourth-lowest spending per capita and the second lowest tax burden.

The Republicans voiced confidence that the November elections will restore the GOP to its former status as the dominant party in New Hampshire. They have lost six of the last seven gubernatorial elections and have been a minority in both houses the state legislature since 2006. The lone member of the state's congressional delegation, Senator Judd Gregg, is retiring at the end of this year. The other Senate seat was won by former governor Jeanne Shaheen in 2008 and both U.S. House seats are also held by Democrats. But polls have shown incumbent Carol Shea-Porter running behind Republican challengers in the First District, while Paul Hodes, the two-term Congressman in the Second District, trails three of his potential Democratic opponents in the race for the open Senate seat. Bob Guida, one of the candidates for Congress in the Second District, was among the Republicans at Saturday's meeting who were eager to credit Hodes, Shea-Porter and the rest of the Democrats in Washington with helping to spark the Tea Party rebellion and other demonstrations of public protest against the President's economic stimulus plan and health care legislation.

"I want you to join me," said Guida "in thanking Nancy Pelosi, Barrack Obama and Harry Reid for bringing the American people back into the process of their own government."



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