



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on February 16, 2012

Maine Caucus Results Look Even Fishier

Will Mitt Romney's "victory" in the February 11 Maine presidential caucuses be taken away like his phony victory in Iowa? That now seems quite possible. The Maine GOP declared the former Massachusetts Governor the narrow winner of the state's presidential caucus February 11, but Romney's 194-vote margin of victory over Texas Congressman Ron Paul is being whittled away as more results have been reported.



Moreover, the state's rural Washington County — along with a few other communities that postponed their caucuses February 11 — will hold the final caucuses Saturday, February 18 and may decide the victor of the non-binding straw poll.

But GOP Party Chairman Charlie Webster insists that he will not release updated results from the additional caucuses, even as he comes under increasing fire from his fellow Maine Republicans and national Ron Paul campaign officials. In results in the three counties that have been released to the public, Ron Paul won more votes than were reported in the official results. Webster claims that the missing votes — when all of them are counted — will favor Romney, and that he is not going to give the press access to updated results. "No one has access," he [told](#) the *Daily Caller* February 15. "There will be no access. We will give it to the committee on March 10. We are not going to release them [the missing votes]. People can whine and complain and plead, but I'm not going to make them public."

Webster admits there were clerical errors in the tally on February 11. "What I tell people is that I'm not going to fire my staff because they make clerical errors," he [told](#) the *Daily Caller*. "My poor staffer is in tears, because people are harassing her."

Washington County, which will caucus February 18, has some powerful party officials who are already complaining about Webster's claim he will not announce updated results. "I think it's not surprising that there would be very strong objections to the notion that our votes wouldn't count in Washington County," Maine Senate President Kevin Raye (R-Perry) [told](#) the *Bangor Daily News* February 14. "I've made known my position that those votes should count and the [GOP] chair said he would take that request to the state committee." Raye's district is in Washington County.

While Paul campaign officials immediately balked about the Maine GOP Chairman's premature decision to award Romney the victory in advance of the Washington County caucuses, errors in the official vote totals have metastasized as more results have become known. "It's no longer just about Washington County," the *Christian Science Monitor* [reported](#) February 15. "There are towns whose votes went uncounted, and other towns whose caucus dates are yet to come. Plus — and here's the big finish — the Paul forces are now fully alerted, and if you've ever been on their wrong side, you know what that means. Their social media organizations are going to be focused on turning out more caucus attendees



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than the Washington County GOP has ever seen.”

Local Maine newspapers have uncovered a number of errors in the official results that appeared to favor Romney over Paul. “While the state GOP says Paul got 37 votes to Romney’s 30, Waldo County’s spreadsheet shows Paul winning, 71-50,” the *Portland Press Herald* [reported](#) February 15. The newspaper continued:

Waldo County Republican Party Chairman Raymond St. Onge explained that several towns held a “super caucus” in Belfast on Feb. 4 and he faxed those results to state party headquarters a few days later. The problem, St. Onge said, is that those early returns were never added to those from the other Waldo County towns that caucused and reported in on Saturday — leaving his county’s overall results incomplete.

Then there’s the city of Waterville, where 21 people voted for Paul, five went with Romney and three lined up behind Newt Gingrich. Those results don’t appear in the state GOP’s tally, which shows nothing but goose eggs for the Elm City.

The *Bangor Daily News* [reported](#) February 15 that failure to count all of the county’s caucus votes has led to a resolution to censure Chairman Webster. “Members of the Waldo County GOP Committee voted Tuesday evening to recommend a censure of Maine Republican Party Chairman Charlie Webster for his handling of the party’s presidential caucuses. Raymond St. Onge, who leads the Waldo County GOP, said the initial motion was to call for a vote of no confidence in Webster and a recommendation that he step down from his post.”

The [state GOP somehow reversed the caucus results](#) in Waldo County’s City of Belfast, according to the Belfast Caucus Chairman Matt McDonald, and then reported no results in the official tally. McDonald spoke via Skype with the Fox network’s Cincinnati affiliate: “We caucused and the vote was eight for Ron Paul, seven for Rick Santorum, and five for Mitt Romney and there were two undecideds.” McDonald told reporter Ben Swann that he had spoken to the GOP leadership in Augusta, Maine about their early February 4 caucus after no votes had been recorded online in the official results. McDonald told Swann that he was told by party leaders the results the GOP had from Belfast was that Romney — not Paul — had won the city caucus with nine votes, Santorum came in second with five votes and Paul came in third with two votes — close to the opposite of the actual county caucus results.

The above voting irregularities do not account for the entire 194-vote margin of victory GOP leaders claimed on behalf of Mitt Romney February 11. Indeed, Webster may be right that when all the results are updated Romney will remain the victor in the state caucuses. It’s possible the publicly reported errors and incomplete results may simply be cherry-picked data on behalf of the Ron Paul campaign and that there were equal or greater errors made against the Romney campaign. But McDonald’s report on the Belfast results in particular indicates that perhaps Webster’s impression of the nature and scope of the errors appears mistaken at best. And the controversy will only heighten without a public update of the results from the GOP leadership after the remaining February 18 caucuses.

Photo: Republican presidential candidate Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas) speaks from a balcony of Linda Bean’s Maine Kitchen & Topside Tavern during a campaign stop in Freeport, Maine, Jan. 28, 2012: AP Images



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