



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 14, 2010

## Michael Steele Seeks Second Term as RNC Chairman

Much to everyone's surprise, Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele has announced his intent to run for a second term. His news came on the same day that Fox News predicted that Steele would declare that in fact he would not be seeking re-election. Fox News reported on Monday afternoon, "Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele will speak with RNC members Monday evening in which he is expected to announce a decision about whether to make another run for the party chairmanship. A handful of well-placed and influential RNC insiders tell Fox News they expect Steele to announce he is not running for re-election."



However, Steele engaged in a "private conference call" on Monday evening, where it is likely that he made the decision to run for re-election after all.

During the conference call, Steele reportedly outlined his record. An ABC News blog post indicates that during his discussion with the 168-member committee, Steele told them, "I'm asking tonight for your support, I'm asking for another term."

The [New York Times](#) writes that the chairman admitted on his conference call that he has "stumbled" in his position and has "accounted to you for such shortcomings."

According to [USA Today](#), "The news [of Steele's re-election bid] was posted on the Twitter account of Saul Anuzis, a former Michigan GOP party chairman who is among several candidates seeking to oust Steele."

Steele, the former lieutenant governor of Maryland, acquired the coveted post in 2009, as the Democratic Party gained confidence following President Obama's election.

Unfortunately for Steele, as chairman of the RNC, he has faced harsh criticism for a variety of things. First, his fundraising and financial records have been cause for concern. Last month, a top RNC aide submitted his [resignation](#), ascribing his decision to Steele's inept leadership, particularly his financial control. In the resignation letter, Gentry Collins wrote:

In the previous two non-presidential cycles, the RNC carried over \$4.8 and \$3.1 million respectively in cash reserve balances into the presidential cycles. In stark contrast, we enter the 2012 presidential cycle with 100 percent of the RNC's \$15 million in lines of credit tapped out, and unpaid bills likely to add millions to that debt.

Collins commented specifically on the midterm elections, adding that the committee was unable to afford an independent expenditure ad campaign on behalf of their candidates, was unable to fund a paid voter turnout operation or Senate and gubernatorial races, and offered only a fraction of the direct-to-



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candidate financial contributions they made four years ago.

In addition to the RNC's financial woes, Steele has been criticized for remarks he made in regard to the war in Afghanistan, calling it "a war of Obama's choosing."

During an interview with National Public Radio, Steele responded to his critics, contending that the RNC should pay less attention to the institution and more to building the party at the state level.

Defending his leadership to Politico, Steele explained, "I was very clear when I became chairman that I would be a different kind of chairman, number one. And number two, that I think we should devolve activities away from this building and back out into the communities, back out into the streets. And that's what we've done."

A number of other Republicans have indicated an interest in succeeding Steele, including Maria Cino, who led the 2008 Republican national convention in St. Paul; Reince Preibus, chairman of the Wisconsin GOP; Saul Anuzis, former Michigan GOP leader; Gentry Collins, former Republican political director; and Ann Wagner, former ambassador to Luxembourg under President George W. Bush.

Of Steele's plan to run for re-election, the *New York Times* wrote, "The decision by Mr. Steele was met with anger and astonishment from an array of Republican officials. It was far from clear that his bid for a second term would be successful or that he would emerge as one of the leading contenders on Jan. 14, when the committee elects a chairman to guide the party through an election cycle where the chief goal is defeating President Obama. "

*Politico* calls Steele's announcement "a direct rebuke to the party's establishment wing."

With six or seven contenders for the position, the January 14 vote will likely entail a multi-ballot election.

Most notable, according to [PBS.org](#), is "how actively involved potential 2012 presidential candidates — Tim Pawlenty, Mitt Romney, Sarah Palin, Newt Gingrich — will be in picking the party chief."



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