



New Hampshire: It's Donald and Bernie for the Win

To nobody's surprise, Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders won their respective primary contests in New Hampshire, with Trump taking 35 percent out of a crowded Republican field and Sanders triumphing by a huge margin — 60 percent to 38 percent — over Hillary Clinton.

Trump is resoundingly popular among New Hampshire Republicans, where so-called “values voters” — social conservatives and others for whom religious values are a strong electoral motivator — are only a small part of the electorate (New Hampshire is the second-least religious state in the country). It is therefore surprising that Ted Cruz, an unabashedly religious candidate, appears to have polled third in the race (12 percent), edging out Establishment favorites Jeb Bush (11 percent) and Marco Rubio (11 percent).

In second place in the GOP field was Ohio governor John Kasich (16 percent), who up until now has been a non-factor in the polls and debates alike. Kasich has wide appeal in New Hampshire, although it is unclear whether he will remain competitive anywhere besides Ohio.

Much further back in the pack were New Jersey's stentorian governor Chris Christie (7 percent), former HP CEO Carly Fiorina (4 percent), and the amiable surgeon Ben Carson (2 percent).

With his signature common touch, Trump told cheering supporters that, among other things, he intended to “knock the hell out of ISIS,” get rid of Common Core, and stop “chipping away at the Second Amendment,” so that Americans would never be helpless in the face of gun-wielding terrorists the way Parisians were last fall. He also indicated, to rapturous cheers, that he intended to “repeal and replace ObamaCare” — though discerning listeners might well have wondered what he meant by “replace.”

On the Democratic side, the colorful socialist Bernie Sanders, who hails from neighboring Vermont, more than fulfilled poll-driven expectations. The Establishment has not given up on Hillary Clinton, however, and continues to portray Sanders' New Hampshire victory as the eccentric senator's last electoral gasp before running into Clinton's “southern firewall.” Blacks, who are not much of a demographic factor in Iowa and New Hampshire, will vote overwhelmingly for Clinton, goes the current wisdom, and will ensure she wins the populous southern states en route to an overwhelming victory.

Regardless, Sanders became the first Jewish American to win a presidential primary, and was upbeat about his prospects. “Tonight we serve notice to the economic and political establishment of this country that the American people will not accept a corrupt campaign finance system ... and we will not accept a rigged economy,” he told his supporters, adding that this victory will “echo from Wall Street to





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Washington, from Maine to California” the message that “the government of our great country belongs to all of the people, and not just a handful of the country.”

Going forward, the outcome for neither party is foreordained; replication of Trump’s victory in New Hampshire is by no means assured in more religiously conservative states, where the Cruz campaign is well-organized and has attracted supporters every bit as enthusiastic as The Donald’s.

The Democrats, meanwhile, may be starting to question Hillary Clinton’s electability after a lackluster showing in Iowa compounded with the New Hampshire defeat (a state she won in 2008). Her supposed appeal among minorities aside, Hillary still has the backing of many wealthy donors as well as (presumably) most of the Democrat “super-delegates,” whose purpose is to ensure that an Establishment-vetted and approved candidate gets the nomination. But that may change as the race progresses. For one thing, Clinton’s burgeoning legal troubles threaten to burst her bubble of invincibility at any moment. For another thing, Sanders did better than Clinton among New Hampshire women. And as for those supposedly unshakeable black voters? Sanders will be in New York on the morning after to have breakfast with none other than the Reverend Al Sharpton, to test just how deep that support runs.

The upcoming Nevada caucuses may be kinder to Hillary Clinton, but Donald Trump, not surprisingly, is the runaway GOP frontrunner in a state that has benefitted enormously from his casinos and other entertainment ventures. Stay tuned.

Photos of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders giving their victory speeches in New Hampshire: AP Images



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