



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on May 19, 2010

Rand Paul Victorious in Kentucky GOP Primary

Eye surgeon and Tea Party favorite Rand Paul won a handy victory over the Republican Party establishment in the Kentucky Senate primary Tuesday, winning the GOP primary against Kentucky Secretary of State Trey Grayson by about a 59-35 margin.

"The tea party movement is about saving the country from a mountain of debt that is devouring our country and that I think could lead to chaos," Paul [said](#) in his victory speech.

On paper, Paul's Republican primary victory should never have happened. Dr. Paul is a political novice who had never run for office. But he defeated Grayson, a two-time winner in statewide election politics who had the political and financial backing of the GOP Washington establishment. Grayson had won the endorsement of Kentucky's other Republican Senator, GOP Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, as well as the endorsements of former Vice President Dick Cheney, former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Kentucky Congressman Hal Rogers, and former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum.



Paul did have several advantages. He is the son of fellow medical doctor and former presidential candidate Ron Paul of Texas, and was able to tap into his father's national donor network. The younger Paul [raised \\$3 million](#) for the primary, much of it online from small donors across the nation. Grayson had kept pace with Paul in campaign donations until the final stretch of the primary, but much of his donations were in larger sums, including [nearly \\$500,000 in Political Action Committee donations](#) (Paul took less than \$10,000 in PAC donations).

Paul had also been endorsed by retiring Kentucky Senator Jim Bunning (who had a very public feud with McConnell), Sarah Palin, and conservative GOP Senator Jim DeMint.

The Democratic National Committee was quick to record the victory (correctly, in this instance) as a loss for the GOP establishment and Mitch McConnell — and to reveal their strategy to paint Paul as an extremist in the November general election. "In a show of weakness for the Minority Leader, and in a race that symbolized the fight over the heart and soul of the Republican Party, Rand Paul overcame McConnell's handpicked candidate by a large margin," Democratic National Chairman Tim Kaine wrote on the [DNC blog](#). "Unfortunately for Republicans, ordinary Americans are unlikely to be receptive to extreme candidates like Rand Paul in the general election this November."



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The “extremism” of Dr. Paul may be the best middle-of-the-road issue to take to the general election, as the DNC is defining opposition to “stimulus” spending and huge deficits as “extreme.” “Democrats are now in a better position to win Kentucky’s open Senate seat,” Kaine [wrote](#). He added that Paul’s “ideas are outside of the political mainstream and ... would do nothing to put Kentuckians to work, help them send their kids to college or make health care more affordable.”

Paul’s victory is the latest in a wave of anti-incumbency and anti-bailout voter rage. “Tea Party tidal wave coming,” Paul [predicted](#) Monday. “It’s already come to Utah, and tomorrow it comes to Kentucky.” He was right. The Tea Party movement may shake up both parties before November.

Photo of Rand Paul: AP Images

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