



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 8, 2010

Republicans Continue to Debate O'Donnell Nomination

On Sunday's Meet the Press, New Jersey's Republican Governor Chris Christie and South Carolina's Republican Senator Jim DeMint appeared as guests and evaluated the results of the 2010 midterm elections.

Both men asserted strong support for the Tea Party movement, but Christie seemed to be disappointed in some of the decisions made by Tea Partiers, most notably contending that the GOP nomination of Christine O'Donnell for Senator in Delaware cost Delaware residents a "really good Senator": establishment Republican Mike Castle. DeMint, however, continued to defend O'Donnell as Delaware's Republican candidate, asserting that it was in fact a lack of GOP support for O'Donnell that ultimately cost Republicans the Delaware seat.



While evaluating the Tea Party as a whole, Christie stated, "[At] the core that drives the Tea Party in my view are four principles: less spending, less intrusive government, less regulations, and lower taxes. At their best, the Republican Party maintains these principles. At bottom is a positive influence."

However, he added, "You're going to have variants. I endorsed Mike Castle in the primary because I felt he was the best person. I think Delaware was a missed opportunity to have a really good United States senator, and that's why I endorsed Mike Castle."

The Republican establishment and media outlets such as *Politico* appeared to agree with Governor Christie. Days after Delaware's GOP primary, *Politico* reported: "A bloc of prominent senators and operatives said party purists like Sarah Palin and Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) had foolishly pushed nominees too conservative to win in politically competitive states."

Likewise, immediately following the results of Delaware's Republican primary, Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina remarked, "If you think what happened in Delaware is a 'win' for the Republican Party then we don't have a snowball's chance to win the White House. If you think Delaware was a wake-up call for Republicans then we have a shot at doing well for a long time."

O'Donnell has been a point of contention for the GOP establishment since her victory on September 14. After her defeat of Mike Castle, a politician who served the state of Delaware for two decades in multiple capacities, both the media and the establishment targeted her as a weak and ultimately extreme candidate for the senatorial race. The Tea Partiers, however, asserted that O'Donnell represented the core values of the Tea Party movement, pointing to Mike Castle's multiple failures to adhere to conservative principles.

Tea Party Express chairman Amy Kremer defended the Tea Party's nomination of O'Donnell following the GOP primary:



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If Mike Castle is not the most liberal Republican in Congress right now, he is one of them. He voted for TARP and cap-and-trade, 'cash for clunkers,' I could go on and on. If we send him back to Washington, he'll vote with Obama-Reid-Pelosi the majority of the time. At some point you have to stand on principle and stop playing these party politics.

On *Meet the Press*, Senator DeMint, an active supporter of Tea Party candidates in the 2010 elections, said he believes that the Tea Party did not cost the GOP the Senate as stated by *Meet the Press* host David Gregory, and in fact, "is responsible for every Republican win this election."

"I supported all the Republican candidates including Christine O'Donnell," declared DeMint. "Unfortunately, she was so maligned by Republicans, I don't think she had a chance. But we had historic gains in the Senate."

Gregory responded, "Senator, you're not really saying it was really lack of Republican support that tanked her candidacy, are you? This is a woman who said in a national ad that she was not a witch."

To this, DeMint replied, "I think we did see in the wake of her primary win that a number of Republicans suggested she was not a viable candidate. That did make it difficult for her to start on the right foot."

Following O'Donnell's primary victory, the *Washington Post* reported, "A senior Republican, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to offer a candid view, said the national senatorial committee would 'walk' out of the Delaware race."

In the end, the National Republican Senatorial Committee did provide funding for O'Donnell's campaign, but it has been a widely accepted fact that the assistance to the newcomer was limited.

Continuing to defend the effects of the Tea Party movement on this year's midterm elections, DeMint concluded, "But all over the country, we saw candidates like Pat Toomey in Pennsylvania, Marco Rubio in Florida, Rand Paul in Kentucky ... we saw candidates that were supported by the Tea Party and a new active wave of citizens change the wave of the Senate. This is what Republicans have needed for a long time. New, young Republicans, [a] Cuban-American Senator, we've got an African-American congressman.... This is a huge change for the Republican Party and I think it's going to be very positive for our country."

DeMint endorsed a number of winning candidates, including Marco Rubio in Florida and Mike Lee in Utah.

Photo of Senator Jim DeMint: AP Images



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