



Written by [Kelly Holt](#) on August 1, 2012

Texas Tea Party Scores With Cruz

In the Texas [runoff](#) election yesterday, Tea Party choice Ted Cruz (R) wrestled the nomination from the establishment's incumbent Lt. Governor David Dewhurst. The powerful Texas seat is currently held by retiring Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, who has served since 1993. In November, Cruz will face Democrat Paul Sadler, a state representative, but the seat is favored to remain in Republican territory.



The widely watched race for this important seat is reputed to be the most expensive in Texas' political history. Combined, the two candidates spent more than \$40 million. Cruz's opponent, wealthy Dewhurst, loaned his own campaign at least \$24.5 million. But, as Fox News reports, "Cruz has a fiery stage presence that made tea party supporters across the state swoon, and received millions from national, conservative organizations which targeted Dewhurst as too moderate."

Dewhurst received 44 percent of the vote in the May primary, but that wasn't enough to avoid a runoff. Since Dewhurst didn't score a majority, the runoff pitted him against second-placer Cruz.

Cruz is a Cuban-American lawyer and former state solicitor general. Yahoo!News reported comments from his [victory speech](#): "Tonight is a victory for the grassroots. It is a testament to Republican women, to tea party leaders and to grassroots conservatives. This is how elections are supposed to be decided — by 'we the people.' "

Indeed, his victory made an elephant-sized statement for the grassroots. The race has proven that the efforts of the Tea Party can upset the Republican establishment. In Texas, that establishment was firmly behind Dewhurst. Cruz took important [endorsements](#) from national figures such as Sarah Palin and Jim DeMint, but not from his own governor, failed presidential hopeful Rick Perry, who backed Dewhurst.

One of those endorsers, Chris Chocola, head of Club for Growth, had this to say:

Ted Cruz is a champion of economic freedom and we look forward to seeing him fight for America in the Senate. Ted Cruz won because he clearly articulated the pro-growth message that Republican voters across the country have responded to. Tonight, Texas Republicans have shown Washington that the people do not work for the politicians — the politicians work for the people.

Fox continued, "Cruz [son of a Cuban immigrant] memorized the U.S. Constitution while in high school and successfully painted his opponent as wishy-washy — even though they actually disagree on little, either politically or ideologically. The 41-year-old Cruz had never run for political office but bolstered his political credentials arguing in front of the state Supreme Court as the longest-serving solicitor general in Texas history."

Of the Tea Party upset, Cruz added, "That's the way the democratic process is supposed to work. It's not supposed to be a bunch of guys in a smoky room in Austin picking the next senator."

Cruz also took praise from [TURF](#), Texans Uniting for Reform and Freedom. Founder Terri Hall, instrumental in battling the Trans Texas Corridor (TTC), gave Dewhurst an "F" on TURF's voter guide for his toll policies. Along with the TTC, tolling of free roads has been a fierce and important issue in



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recent Texas politics. Hall said of yesterday's election results, "It's a great day for Texas taxpayers and this sends a strong message to both Austin and Washington: we don't want more taxes, especially to use roads we've already paid for with tax money. Enough is enough!"

Of the two candidates, Cruz has been more open in expressing his opinions and intentions in his campaign speeches. Now will be the time to put his money where his mouth is, and deliver on those promises. Those include increasing border security and enforcement, strengthening the military, and identifying constitutionality for every new congressional bill. But the first issue Cruz says he intends to address is "to [repeal](#) every syllable of every word of ObamaCare. There will be enormous pressure to compromise; I think we ought to repeal it in its entirety."

But critics warn voters to be wary and watchful. In what is now Big Red Texas, voters should remember that in the 1960s, Republicans carried only one Texas county. To grasp the significance of that, readers should know that Texas has 254 counties, one of them even larger than the state of Rhode Island; the lone red county was in a remote part of west Texas. The shift that has taken the state from blue to red has been remarkable. So critics ask why, in a state that is now Republican, is it more liberal in some of its policies than it was as a Democrat state?

A fair question. It will be up to Texas voters to hold Cruz to his promises, and keep him accountable.

Photo: Former Texas Solicitor General Ted Cruz answers questions from the media at a voting precinct, July 31, 2012, in Houston: AP Images



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