



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 17, 2010

Top RNC Aide Blames Steele for His Resignation

In a five-page resignation letter submitted on Tuesday morning, Republican National Committee (RNC) political director Gentry Collins delivered a harsh indictment of RNC chairman Michael Steele. *Politico* reports that the letter condemns the “disorganization that plagues the Republican party.”

The [New York Times](#) writes that Gentry Collins is “a respected Republican strategist who had worked alongside Mr. Steele for two years and often defended his stewardship of the committee,” but that his five-page letter projects a different sentiment, one that asserts that the Republican Party is “financially broken and entering a presidential election cycle in urgent need of repair.”



Collins’ letter targets what he perceives to be a mismanagement of the Republican Party’s money at the hands of Michael Steele. *Politico* reports:

“In the previous two non-presidential cycles, the RNC carried over \$4.8 million and \$3.1 million respectively in cash reserve balances into the presidential cycles,” Collins writes, underlining his words for emphasis. “In stark contrast, we enter the 2012 presidential cycle with 100% of the RNC’s \$15 million in lines of credit tapped out, and unpaid bills likely to add millions to that debt.”

The short version of the RNC’s 2010 troubles as described by Collins: The committee couldn’t afford to run an independent expenditure ad campaign on behalf of their candidates, didn’t fund a paid voter turnout operation or Senate and gubernatorial races, left its vaunted 72-hour turnout program effectively unfunded, offered only a fraction of the direct-to-candidate financial contributions they made four years ago and dramatically scaled back its support of state parties.

Collins acknowledged that the party could have done better, both in the election results and financially, had it not been for the ineffective leadership of Michael Steele.

Collins supports his assertions by citing a study that the GOP could have won the Senate races in Washington and Colorado if the party had better “field operations.” Likewise, he claims that the Republicans could have won the gubernatorial races in Connecticut, Minnesota, and Vermont if the GOP had sufficient funds. He makes similar allegations about 21 House races.

Steele’s leadership has been heavily criticized in recent months. Days before the midterm elections, Steele appeared on [camera](#) with *Politico* to address allegations that his critics made about the financial burdens of the RNC:

We took out a line of credit, but a line of credit is not debt. So let’s see what we have to use in that line of credit. Just as the NRSC (National Republican Senatorial Committee) took out a \$15 million



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line of credit and the NRCC (National Republican Congressional Committee) took out a \$20 million line of credit. We're all in the same position because we all believe we need to win.

The leadership of the Party here within the RNC, the NRSC, and the NRCC all figured we need to do what we need to do to win. And we've done that. We have raised to date \$175 million, which is 37 percent more than what the Democrats did in 2006 in the exact same position that the RNC is right now — without the White House, without the Congress, without the Senate. So we've bested the DNC in a very similar position, under the same finance rules as I might add — McCain/Feingold.

We have bested the record of 1994, in today's dollars, so I think we've done okay...This is the first time the RNC is competing in all 50 states in the Union. This is the first time the RNC has done micro-targeting for every Congressional race in the country.

In other words, in order for the RNC to make a complete investment to win in 2010, they had to do some financial maneuvering.

Steele asserts that he has "no regrets" in how he ran the committee in the past year, as the GOP won Massachusetts, Virginia, and Hawaii, and was on the road to win more states on Election Day, which it did.

Defending his leadership to *Politico*, Steele continued:

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.

In the same interview, Steele indicated that he would consider seeking another term as RNC chair depending on a variety of factors, including the results of the midterm elections.

While the Republicans made great gains on November 2, according to *The Blaze*, "Steele has not yet announced whether he plans to seek a second two-year term as RNC chair and Collins' outgoing assessment will likely make it that much more difficult for Steele to succeed in a possible bid."

Steele appeared confident, however, when he told *Politico*, "If I decide to run, I will win."

Photo: Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele speaks during an election night gathering hosted by the National Republican Congressional Committee: AP Image



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