



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on March 9, 2016

Trump Wins Three of Four, While Clinton and Sanders Split

Overcoming a week in which he split four states on Saturday with Texas Senator Ted Cruz, and actually saw Cruz garner more delegates, New York businessman Donald Trump (shown) made a strong comeback Tuesday, winning three of four states. Cruz finished second in all three, while Trump finished second in the lone state won by Cruz.



Senator Bernie Sanders overcame a 30-point polling deficit to Hillary Clinton to defeat her in Michigan. But Clinton easily bested Sanders in Mississippi.

It appeared Saturday that with Trump's recent losses to Cruz, coupled with what was considered a weak debate performance last Thursday, Trump's status as the front-runner might be over. After winning three of four states, and more delegates, it now appears Trump's position as the front-runner is reestablished, at least for now.

Trump scored a double-digit victory in Michigan, receiving 37 percent of the vote to 25 percent for Cruz, who finished second. Cruz can take heart in that he edged John Kasich, who is governor of the neighboring state of Ohio. Kasich had 24 percent, while Senator Marco Rubio of Florida continued his decline in electoral strength, obtaining only nine percent of the vote.

Most of the campaigning was done in Michigan, but Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant's endorsement of Cruz led the Texas senator to hold a late rally near Jackson. But Trump won another double-digit victory in the Magnolia State, with 47 percent of the vote, compared to 36 percent for Cruz. A surprise from Mississippi was that Kasich, the governor of a northern industrial state, ran ahead of Rubio of Florida. Kasich had nine percent, with Rubio struggling to break five percent.

The results were much more to Cruz's liking in Idaho, where he bested Trump by a large margin, 45-28. Here, Rubio was able to better Kasich, getting 16 percent to only seven percent for the Ohio governor.

The final contest was in Hawaii. There, Trump won his third victory of the evening, netting 42 percent to Cruz's 33 percent. Rubio trailed badly at 13 percent, followed by Kasich at 11.

At the end of the evening, the delegate haul for Trump was 71, compared to 56 for Cruz. Kasich took home 17 delegates, while Rubio was shut out. This dismal finish for Rubio led to increased calls for him to get out of the race, but Rubio told supporters that he was going to win his home state of Florida on March 15, and that the winner of the Florida primary, a winner-take-all state, would be the party's nominee.

It is hard to chart a path to the nomination for Rubio, even if he were able to win Florida. Kasich is also vowing to stay in, at least until the Ohio primary next week. It is also a winner-take-all state. But with a third-place finish in Michigan, trailing not only Trump, but also Cruz, the same thing could be said for



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Kasich as is said about Rubio. Even a victory in his home state would probably not lead to a Kasich nomination. Particularly concerning for Kasich was that Trump spent only about \$100,000 in Michigan for his victory. Cruz reportedly spent even less, with one media outlet saying Cruz put only about a thousand dollars into the Michigan contest.

Trump continues to benefit from the split field of Republicans. According to a *Washington Post*-ABC poll released the day of the primaries, Trump's unfavorable rating among Republicans was 46 percent, the highest it has been. It would appear that if Trump had only one opponent, such as Cruz, his narrow victories would become losses, and his large wins would become, if not losses, only narrow wins. Cruz appears to be the major beneficiary of Rubio's collapse, but Kasich has benefitted as well. It is clear that almost none of Rubio's former supporters are making a trek to Trump.

In fact, it would appear that Trump is not picking up many new supporters, but at the same time, he is not losing very many of his loyal troops.

As was the case last week, late deciders and those who voted on election day were less inclined to back Trump than those who made up their minds weeks ago.

So why is it that Trump, although unable to win the hearts, minds, and votes of the majority of Republican voters, at least so far, is doing well enough to win pluralities in states in the Northeast, the Southeast, the Midwest, and even in far-flung Hawaii?

The easy answer has been that the voters are "angry" at the "establishment" (however that is defined). But that begs the question. There are many reasons for the Republican electorate to be angry, certainly, but what is the principal driver of the anger that is, in turn, driving the Trump Train? In a word, trade. Lower-income voters in the Republican Party, who comprise the largest single bloc of Trump's support, have a long, growing, and intensifying concern, and even anger, over what they perceive as the lack of concern among the corporate elites about the hollowing out of American industry. This issue, leading to the flight of good, high-paying jobs out of the country, is an issue that Fox commentator Charles Hurt rightly said Republicans have ignored, for a long time, "at their peril."

This is the issue that was first raised by Pat Buchanan in his campaign against President George H.W. Bush back in 1991-92, and then again in 1996 against Senator Robert Dole. Texas computer tycoon Ross Perot used the issue, along with the national debt issue, to win 20 percent of the popular vote in his 1992 Independent campaign.

To paraphrase President Barack Obama's pastor, Jeremiah Wright, "The chickens are coming home to roost" for those who have continued to back trade agreements that have diminished America's national sovereignty and sent American industry overseas. Although called "free trade agreements," they are actually examples of internationally managed trade, and a growing number of Americans see them as benefitting foreigners and corporate elites in the United States, but not the average American. There are other factors involved, to be sure, in the flight of American industry out of the country, such as the tax structure and heavy-handed government regulation, but certainly trade deals, seen as highly unfavorable to American workers, are the easiest for the average voter to grasp, and act upon in the voting booth.

Another factor that is helping the Trump effort is the "open primaries." In states with open primaries, such as Michigan and Mississippi, Trump's bombastic style draws many Democrats, repulsed by the choices in their own party, to cross over and support the New York billionaire.

Unless Trump is able to win most of the remaining winner-take-all states, which include Florida and



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Ohio next week, and Arizona, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota, and New Jersey, he will still have a difficult time getting to the 1,237 delegate votes he needs to win. The same is true for Cruz, and even more so for Kasich and Rubio.

Trump could very well defeat Rubio in his home state of Florida, and best Kasich in his home state of Ohio next week. But Cruz should have an excellent chance to win in Arizona, Montana, Nebraska, and South Dakota, especially if Rubio and Kasich are out of the race. Trump is favored in New Jersey, where he has many business interests.

It appears that Trump is making an effort to broaden his appeal and unite Republicans, as evidenced by his rambling hour-long “press conference,” given when it was clear he had won in both Michigan and Mississippi. In it, he dismissed concerns over his proclivity for profanity, and insisted that he could be presidential, even going so far as to say he could more presidential than just about anybody, except Abraham Lincoln. (Move over George Washington?)

While Trump has been unusually aggressive in leveling personal attacks on his Republican rivals, he has not been unique. Personal differences can be overcome, and the party can unite even after bruising primary battles, of which there are many examples throughout American history, in both parties.

But the philosophical differences are more difficult to set aside, as evidenced by the divisive 1968 Chicago Democratic National Convention, or even the more serene contest between President Gerald Ford and Governor Ronald Reagan in 1976. Besides the trade issues, Trump has stoked animosity among the Republican base by calling Planned Parenthood an organization that “does wonderful things.”

On the abortion issue, Trump’s fairly recent conversion to the pro-life side, and his favorable comments about Planned Parenthood, are not as damaging as some commentators might think. After all, while the Republican Party has been a pro-life party since Reagan, this is not an important issue for many within the party — with some pro-choicers perhaps voting for Trump because they think he would not be as adamant on the pro-life side as a Cruz or Rubio.

On the Democratic Party side, Senator Bernie Sanders won in Michigan over Clinton by appealing to some of the same voters as Trump — castigating Clinton’s long-time support for multinational trade deals, trade deals that displaced Michigan workers view as detrimental to their interests.

Yet with Clinton sweeping southern states on the strength of her support in the African-American community, she still holds a strong lead in delegates (740-546), which would give her the nomination, after a protracted struggle.

The specter of a potential indictment over the e-mail scandal hangs over the Clinton campaign and the Democratic Party. As it stands now, Republicans are voting in the primaries in much larger numbers than the Democrats, with 65 percent more Republicans trudging to the polls than at this point of the campaign in 2008. Part of that is attributable to the Trump candidacy, with voters driven to the polls to either vote for him or against him, and part of can be traced to Republicans sensing a chance to recapture the White House after eight years of Obama.

If the Republican race continues in doubt all the way to the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, that turnout can only be expected to grow.

Steve Byas is a professor of history at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College in Moore, Oklahoma. His book, History’s Greatest Libels, is a challenge to some of the great lies of history against such persons as



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