



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on August 27, 2010

## Who will be Alaska's GOP Senatorial Candidate?

This year's midterm primaries proved that no politician is safe from the wrath of the American people, as establishment Republicans and Democrats like Senators Bob Bennett and Arlen Specter can attest. While a number of incumbents have been ousted in the primaries, perhaps the greatest shock was experienced by establishment Republican and Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski, who currently trails Tea Party favorite Joe Miller.



Fox News explains, "Polls taken before primary day had shown Murkowski, a two-term senator from an Alaska political dynasty, leading handily against the first time candidate. But challenger Joe Miller insisted all along that the state's polling was unreliable — as of Wednesday morning, Miller held a 2,000-vote lead."

Miller became a dark-horse candidate in Alaska's GOP senatorial primary, one who seemed to stand little chance against incumbent Murkowski. That was until he was endorsed by Tea Party leader Sarah Palin, giving his campaign the necessary drive to launch forward. In addition to the coveted endorsement of "Mama Grizzly" weeks before the primaries, Miller's crusaders pushed harder, blitzing Alaska's voters with phone calls and mailings asserting Miller's leadership abilities.

The efforts made by the Miller campaign proved to have worked, as he is now giving Murkowski a run for her money. With all of the precincts reported, Murkowski trails Miller by 1,700 votes. The final outcome will not be determined until 16,000 absentee votes are counted, but according to the *Anchorage Daily News*, Murkowski would need to attain an unlikely 56 percent of the absentee vote to win the election.

The *New York Times* also claims that Miller cannot attribute his likely victory solely to the efforts made on his part, but to Murkowski's own campaign. "Ms. Murkowski chose to ignore her conservative opponent — until it was too late."

Additionally, the presence of pro-life legislation on the ballot drew more votes than any other race. It is believed that the anti-abortion measure on the ballot "increased the turnout of conservative voters who could be expected to lean toward Mr. Miller since Ms. Murkowski supports 'abortion rights.'"

Critics of Joe Miller accuse him of launching "attack" ads against the incumbent, placing Murkowski in the defensive position throughout the majority of her campaign. Political consultant Andrew Halcro remarked: "The Murkowski campaign just did not attack, and these guys are bullies." Continuing, he explained, "At the end of the day we weren't going to give credence to his message by responding. But when somebody's whacking away at your kneecaps consistently for two weeks, you're going to start to



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wobble.”

Overall, it seems that Joe Miller’s stance on the issues helped him to rise above his opponent. Loren Leman, former lieutenant governor, contends, “It’s a pattern of votes that runs counter to what would be the base of people that voted in yesterday’s primary. What it comes down to is who will have the backbone to stand up to the excesses coming out of the Obama administration and Congress. Joe has far better credibility in that area.”

Senator John Cornyn of Texas addresses the toppling of establishment politicians like Murkowski: “A little humility is called for....This is an unpredictable election cycle where anybody who has been in and around Washington, D.C. for the last few years is going to be tarred with the same brush.”

In other words, years of experience in Washington may prove to harm rather than help politicians running for office, as seen with Murkowski.

The *New York Times* reports that the results of Alaska’s GOP Senate primary may not be determined until early September, but is confident that regardless of the outcome, Alaska will remain “reliably Republican.”

*Photo: Alaska Senate candidate Joe Miller campaigns door-to-door in Anchorage, Alaska, on Aug. 2, 2010: AP Images*



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