

# Trump wins Republican presidential caucuses in Nevada

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Billionaire real estate mogul Donald Trump won a sweeping victory Tuesday in the Republican caucuses in Nevada, strengthening the arch-reactionary's bid to win the Republican presidential nomination ahead of the "Super Tuesday" primary elections on March 1.

Capitalizing on bitter anti-establishment sentiment within the electorate directed against both traditional parties of big business, the thuggish Trump, who poses as a political "outsider," handily defeated his main rivals, Florida Senator Marco Rubio and Texas Senator Ted Cruz. Trump took 45.9 percent of the caucus vote, compared to 23.9 percent for Rubio and 21.4 percent for Cruz. Retired physician Ben Carson, with 4.8 percent, and Ohio Governor John Kasich, with 3.6 percent, trailed far behind.

Even though the caucuses involved a very small number of participants, some 75,000, in a state with a population of only 2.8 million, the scale and comprehensive character of Trump's victory added to the alarm within the Republican Party and the political establishment as a whole, which initially dismissed Trump's campaign as an amusing side show but are now reckoning with the real possibility of Trump winning the Republican nomination and perhaps the White House.

The concern is not the far-right, militaristic politics of Trump. His major rivals for the Republican nomination, Rubio and Cruz, were themselves elected to the Senate as favorites of the far-right Tea Party faction of the Republican Party. The alarm is primarily over the fact that Trump, who denounces Mexican immigrants as rapists and murderers and calls for a ban on all travel by Muslims to the US, does not conceal the anti-immigrant racism and contempt for democratic rights that underlies the policies of the Republican Party and the entire political establishment.

In typical Trump fashion, the candidate responded to a protester who was ejected from his caucus-eve rally in Las Vegas Monday night by saying he would like to "punch him in the face."

According to network entrance polls, Trump won every single demographic in Nevada. He won the male vote by 24 points and the female vote by 18. He won among those who described themselves as very conservative, somewhat conservative and moderate. He topped Cruz, who presents himself as the Christian candidate par excellence, among born-again evangelicals, and he won even among Hispanics.

Trump defeated Rubio by 41 percent to 30 percent among voters with a college degree, and he topped Cruz among those without a college degree by 51 percent to 22 percent.

Trump has now won three of the first four Republican primary contests, thus far gaining 79 delegates to the Republican Convention. Cruz has 16, Rubio has 15, Kasich has five and Carson has three. It takes 1,237 delegates to win the Republican nomination.

The clear front-runner, Trump appears to be poised to win most of the 11 state primary elections to be held next Tuesday. Those elections—in Texas, Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, Alaska, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Vermont and Virginia—account for 595 delegates, more than any other single day of the primary period. He leads in the most recent polls for eight of these states and is running a close second in the remaining three, including Cruz's home state of Texas.

Nine states hold contests in the two weeks between March 1 and March 15, when the first of the winner-take-all primaries will be held in such large states as Florida, Ohio and Illinois. According to polls, Trump is ahead in all three, including the home states of Rubio and Kasich. Nearly 60 percent of the delegates will

have been allocated by March 15, meaning Trump could amass a sufficient number of delegates by the middle of next month to lock in the nomination.

Trump's candidacy is one expression, on the extreme right, of an unprecedented crisis of political legitimacy of the more than 160-year-old two-party system, which is controlled by the richest one-tenth of 1 percent of the population. He personifies the degraded political environment that is the product of decades of political reaction, during which every form of backwardness has been relentlessly promoted and the class struggle has been suppressed by the trade unions.

To the extent that he is able to attract a section of workers, it is due to his ability to manipulate and play upon intense social anger over ever-rising social inequality, unemployment and the destruction of decent-paying jobs, and channel this discontent along extreme nationalist and chauvinist lines. The primary political responsibility for this rests with the Democratic Party and its trade union adjuncts, whose right-wing, anti-working class policies, obsessive promotion of the politics of race and gender, and hypocrisy and duplicity, in the guise of "left" politics, have produced growing disgust among workers. This has only intensified under Obama, whom workers were conned into supporting on the basis of cynical claims to represent "hope" and progressive "change."

The emergence in Trump of a fascistic element to the pinnacle of the Republican Party must be taken as a warning to the working class. At the same time, it coincides with the initial expression of a broad shift to the left and a growth of anti-capitalist sentiment in the working class and among young people in the form of support for the campaign for the Democratic nomination of the self-described "socialist" Bernie Sanders.

Sanders is not a socialist. He is a bourgeois politician and long-time defender of the capitalist system. His campaign is a response by the ruling class to the danger of the emergence of an independent movement of the working class outside of and opposed to both big business parties.

The instinctive opposition to capitalism must be made politically consciousness and transformed into an independent socialist movement of the working class. That is the only progressive response to the danger represented by the rise of Trump.



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