

Clinton sweeps South Carolina primary as turnout plunges

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Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton won the South Carolina Democratic primary Saturday by a huge margin, defeating Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders by 74 percent to 26 percent. Clinton won 39 delegates to the Democratic nominating convention, compared to 14 for Sanders.

It was Clinton's first substantial victory in the campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, following narrow wins in caucuses in Iowa and Nevada and a sizeable defeat in the first primary, in New Hampshire. She now leads in total elected delegates, 91 to 65, with some 2,500 required for nomination.

Clinton ran up huge totals among African-American voters in the state, with an overall margin of 86 percent to 14 percent, including a 96 percent to 3 percent margin among black voters over 65. Sanders won only two demographic groups tracked in exit polls: white voters and voters under age 30.

Clinton had the support of virtually all the state's Democratic Party officeholders, including its only Democratic congressman, Jim Clyburn, the deputy minority whip, the third-ranking Democrat in the House, and a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, which also endorsed Clinton.

Voter turnout plunged in the South Carolina primary compared to 2008, when Clinton was badly beaten by Barack Obama. Clinton won fewer votes in the two-person contest with Sanders than Obama won in a three-way contest with Clinton and John Edwards eight years ago.

The total vote in South Carolina primaries for both big business parties, held a week apart, was 978,000 in 2008 and 999,000 in 2016, but the balance between the Republicans and Democrats shifted dramatically. In 2008, 532,000 voted in the Democratic primary and 446,000 in the Republican. This year, only 361,000

voted in the Democratic primary while 738,000 voted in the Republican contest, won by billionaire demagogue Donald Trump.

Sanders poured significant resources into the state, including 200 volunteers and nearly \$2 million in campaign advertising, but effectively conceded the contest earlier this week as polls showed Clinton with an insuperable lead.

The main focus of the Clinton campaign was to appeal to identity politics, based on Clinton's gender and her past close ties with the black Democratic Party establishment, while claiming that Sanders's rhetorical attacks on Wall Street and economic inequality made his a "single issue" campaign.

Sanders has attacked Clinton for her close ties to the major banks, demanding that she release the transcripts of speeches to audiences at Goldman Sachs and other financial institutions, for which she received six-figure fees. He told a campaign rally Thursday, "I do not receive many millions of dollars from Wall Street or the pharmaceutical industry or other powerful, wealthy interests in this country, and have not given speeches for hundreds of thousands of dollars to Wall Street."

But he has avoided any discussion of foreign policy, and particularly the aggressive preparation by the Obama administration for wider military action in the Middle East and provocative deployments against Russia and China, confining his criticism to Clinton's vote 14 years ago for war in Iraq.

There are 11 states with Democratic Party contests Tuesday. Clinton is heavily favored in polls taken in the six Southern states voting March 1—Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia—which account for two-thirds of the delegates to be selected that day.

Sanders has focused on the other five states, where he

is in the lead or competitive: primaries in Massachusetts, Oklahoma and Vermont, and caucuses in Colorado and Minnesota. He addressed a series of large rallies this week, including 10,000 in Austin, Texas, 8,000 in Dallas and 7,000 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, finishing Saturday by speaking to supporters in Rochester, Minnesota.

Because of proportional representation, Clinton would not be able to clinch the nomination even if she wins the vast majority of the states on Super Tuesday. Unlike the Republican contest, there is no winner-take-all provision at any stage in the Democratic primary process.

In multiple appearances on Sunday morning television talk shows, Sanders dismissed suggestions that a poor showing on Super Tuesday would mark an end to his campaign, declaring that he had many states ahead for potential victories, including California, the most populous state and the last to hold a primary on June 7.



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