

Sanders, Trump win presidential primaries in Michigan

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Senator Bernie Sanders won an upset victory over former secretary of state Hillary Clinton in the Democratic presidential primary in Michigan, taking 50 percent of the vote compared to 48 percent for Clinton.

Billionaire Donald Trump won the Republican primary in the state, taking 38 percent of the vote, with Texas Senator Ted Cruz edging out Ohio Governor John Kasich for second place, with each winning about 25 percent.

Turnout was significantly higher in both the Democratic and Republican primaries than in previous statewide votes in Michigan. The Democratic vote was up 75 percent from the last contested primary, in 2008. The Republican vote was up 20 percent from the 2012 primary.

The victory for Sanders was powered by an 81 percent margin among voters younger than 30. Sanders won nearly every county outside the Detroit metropolitan area. He more than doubled his support among African-American voters, from 15 percent in recent primaries in the South to over 30 percent.

Besides Michigan, by far the biggest state to vote Tuesday, there were Democratic and Republican primaries in Mississippi and Republican-only contests in Idaho and Hawaii.

Hillary Clinton swept the Mississippi Democratic primary, winning 83 percent of the vote to 16 percent for Sanders. Trump won the Mississippi Republican primary more narrowly, taking 48 percent to 37 percent for Cruz.

Cruz won the Idaho primary easily, winning 42 percent of the vote to 29 percent for Trump. No results were available from Hawaii at the time of writing.

The results of the voting in Michigan, the first large industrial state in the Midwest to hold a presidential primary, intensifies the political crisis wracking both of

the big-business parties, which together exercise an effective political monopoly in the United States.

Sanders, a self-styled “democratic socialist,” defeated the consensus choice of the Democratic Party establishment. The fascistic billionaire Trump won the Republican contest, while the campaign of Florida Senator Marco Rubio, backed by the bulk of the party leadership, has collapsed.

The victory of Sanders, in particular, came as a shock not only to the Democratic Party leadership and the corporate-controlled media, but to Sanders himself. The candidate left Michigan for a series of rallies in Florida and his campaign did not hold the traditional rally for supporters to watch the vote and celebrate the victory, because it did not expect to win.

This is one more demonstration of the vast political gulf separating working people and youth from all the parties and candidates of the corporate-financial elite.

Exit polls from Michigan found that of voters participating in the Democratic primary, 91 percent said the most important issue was health care, inequality or the economy, while only 9 percent said it was terrorism or national security. In addition, 85 percent said the US economic system favors the wealthy and 86 percent said they were worried about the US economy.

As former Obama campaign chief David Axelrod said on CNN, the vote showed that “among working-class whites, and actually among minorities too, there are deep concerns about how the economy is run.” Other media pundits noted that the Clinton campaign now faces an uncertain future in a series of contests in industrial states such as Ohio, Illinois and Missouri next Tuesday, as well as elsewhere in the Midwest and in Appalachia in later weeks.

While the Sanders vote in Michigan showed the growing opposition to big business among working

people and youth, the Trump vote in the same state underscores the dangers facing the working class.

Trump's campaign has taken on an increasingly open fascist character, with attacks on immigrants and minorities, particularly Muslim-Americans, threats of violence, and even, in the past week, appeals at rallies for supporters to stand up and pledge their allegiance to the candidate by raising their arms in a manner reminiscent of the spectacles staged by Mussolini and Hitler.

In the Michigan campaign especially, Sanders and Trump made similar appeals to economic nationalism, with both the "left" Democrat and the ultra-right Republican identifying trade deals, and not the capitalist system, as the cause of mass unemployment and wage-cutting, and attacking corporations for moving jobs to Mexico, China and other countries. Clinton joined in this orgy of chauvinism, denouncing corporations that did not practice "patriotism" in their economic decision-making.

Trump has taken advantage of the right-wing record of the Obama administration and the Democratic Party to exploit the economic grievances of a large layer of lower-income white workers by providing a scapegoat in the form of immigrants, Muslims and other minorities.

The Democratic Party long ago abandoned social reform policies that addressed, if only in a limited way, the class interests of working people—for good-paying jobs, health care, education, housing, etc.—in favor of catering to privileged layers of the middle class concerned with issues of lifestyle, race, gender and sexual orientation.

At the same time, despite the incessant media promotion of the billionaire demagogue, there are definite limits to the support for Trump. Exit polls in Michigan found that 50 percent of Republican primary voters found him untrustworthy, 47 percent would be dissatisfied if he became the nominee, and 44 percent found his campaign the most "unfair" of all the candidates.

Two new national polls found Trump with 34 percent support among registered Republicans and independents who lean Republican (*Washington Post-ABC*) and an even lower 30 percent among the same group (*NBC-Wall Street Journal*).



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