

Clinton, Trump move closer to presidential nominations

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27 April 2016

Former secretary of state Hillary Clinton and billionaire Donald Trump took commanding leads in the campaigns for the Democratic and Republican presidential nominations after results from primary elections held Tuesday in five northeastern states.

Clinton won Pennsylvania, Maryland, Connecticut and Delaware, losing only Rhode Island to Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. Not coincidentally, Rhode Island was the only one of the five states to hold an open primary, where independents as well as registered Democrats could cast ballots.

The campaign by the media and the Democratic Party establishment to declare the presidential contest all but over, and Clinton the winner, had an impact on turnout among youth and students, who have favored Sanders, a self-described “democratic socialist,” by overwhelming margins. Young people constituted a much smaller proportion of the electorate Tuesday, only 10 percent, compared to an average of 17 percent in previous Democratic primaries this year.

In the Republican primaries, Trump won all five states, winning 55 percent or more of the total vote in every contest, with the rest divided between his two remaining rivals. Texas Senator Ted Cruz finished second in Pennsylvania, by far the most populous state to vote Tuesday, while Ohio Governor John Kasich was second in all the others. Neither won more than 30 percent of the vote in any of the five states.

While Tuesday’s results put Clinton and Trump in dominant positions in the contests for the Democratic and Republican presidential nominations, it nonetheless remains a fact that the two frontrunners are the most unpopular political figures in the history of modern American opinion polling. Clinton’s 56 percent unfavorable rating is topped only by Trump’s 65 percent unfavorable rating.

In her remarks to a victory rally in Philadelphia, Clinton focused almost entirely on attacking Trump as the likely Republican nominee. She appealed to Sanders supporters in her rhetoric, repeatedly declaring that “we Democrats” were committed to a series of progressive-sounding measures, ranging from quality, affordable health care to raising wages and lowering the cost of college.

In a rare move, she mentioned foreign policy, pledging to “Keep American troops out of another ground war in the Middle East.” This was a brazen lie, since during her four years as Obama’s secretary of state Clinton was one of the foremost advocates of US military intervention in the civil war in Syria and during the campaign she has called for the setting up of “safe zones” to expand the war for regime-change against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. She continues as well to defend the 2011 US-NATO bombing campaign in Libya, which destroyed the country as a functioning society.

Clinton aides and the Democratic Party establishment as a whole have put increasing pressure on Sanders to drop any attacks on the frontrunner for her Wall Street ties and begin the process of encouraging his supporters to back her once she is nominated. In her victory speech, however, Clinton was careful not to declare the contest for the Democratic presidential nomination over.

Trump was not so cautious. In his typically rambling remarks delivered in the atrium lobby of Trump Tower in Manhattan, the billionaire real estate developer described himself as the “presumptive nominee” and told both Cruz and Kasich that they should withdraw from the race immediately.

At the same time, in an admission that the outcome of the Republican race was still not a settled question,

Trump referred to the upcoming May 3 primary in Indiana as the decisive battle against Cruz. Media tabulations placed Trump's delegate total at 950 after Tuesday's vote and suggested that he had to win both Indiana and California in order to be assured of reaching the majority of 1,237 delegates and avoiding a contested Republican convention.

In terms of convention delegates, Clinton increased her already substantial lead over Sanders. Before Tuesday's voting, Clinton led Sanders 1,428 delegates to 1,153, a margin of 275. According to media tabulations of Tuesday's results, Clinton now leads by 1,618 to 1,267, a margin of 341.

Adding the 519 super-delegates, members of the Democratic National Committee and state and federal elected officials, who have publicly declared their support to Clinton—compared to only 39 for Sanders—brings Clinton's total to 2,137, with 2,382 required for the nomination.

Sanders would have to win nearly 70 percent of the delegates still to be chosen to gain a majority of elected delegates, a practical impossibility since delegates are awarded based on proportional representation. The vast majority of the remaining convention delegates, nearly 700 in all, will be chosen June 7, when primaries are held in California, New Jersey and four other states.

Sanders has begun to respond to the pressure from the Democratic Party establishment to tone down his rhetoric on Clinton's relations with Wall Street, even as he continues campaigning in primary contests set for May, including Indiana, West Virginia, Kentucky and Oregon. Sanders addressed a rally of more than 5,000 people in Huntington, West Virginia Tuesday night, spending most of his time attacking Trump and the Republicans.

In appearances on four Sunday television network interview programs--all but Fox News--Sanders seemed to begin the negotiation of the terms for his inevitable endorsement of Clinton, suggesting that she could win the support of his voters only by taking up issues such as income inequality and the corruption of the US political system by big money.

Speaking on the NBC program "Meet the Press," Sanders declared that if he was unsuccessful in winning the Democratic nomination, "the major responsibility will be on Secretary Clinton to convince all people, not just my supporters, that she is the kind of president this

country needs to represent working people in this country, to take on the big money interests who have so much power, to fight for what the American people want."

By suggesting that Hillary Clinton, whose entire political career has been devoted to the service of American capitalism, could now become a president to "represent working people," Sanders is advertising his own willingness to perpetrate a grotesque and cynical fraud on the American people, including the millions of workers and young people who have supported his campaign.



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