

Bannon-backed Senate candidate Roy Moore wins Alabama Republican primary

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27 September 2017

Former Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court Roy Moore defeated acting-Senator Luther Strange in yesterday's Republican Party US Senate primary election. Moore will go on to challenge Democrat Doug Jones in the December 12 special election that will determine who fills the US Senate seat vacated by Jeff Sessions after he became attorney general in January. Strange was appointed to fill Sessions' seat on an interim basis.

Moore is a darling of the Christian right, who made a name for himself by defying a federal court order that he remove a two-ton statue of the Ten Commandments from the front of the Alabama Supreme Court building, and for ordering local judges to refuse marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

He is fond of filling out his stump speeches with folksy anecdotes and "fire and brimstone" quotes from the Old Testament. At an election-eve rally Monday night, Moore declared that God would determine the outcome of the election and appealed to gun rights voters by waving a pistol on stage.

Breitbart News, with executive chairman and former White House chief strategist Stephen Bannon at the fore, threw its full support behind Moore in an open split with President Donald Trump, who endorsed and campaigned for Strange.

However, Trump's support for Strange was largely a smokescreen, as he sought to balance between the Republican Party establishment and his anti-establishment base, anchored among right-wing middle class layers but including oppressed, angry workers repulsed by both major parties. Bannon and Trump continue to collaborate, with reports indicating that they still speak on the phone on a regular basis.

At a rally for Strange last Friday night, Trump made a thinly veiled appeal to Southern racists by denouncing black professional football athletes who protested police violence during the National Anthem, and later praising

NASCAR, whose race car drivers are overwhelmingly white, for respecting the flag and the military.

Moore received the endorsement of a host of right-wing political celebrities including Sarah Palin, Chuck Norris, former White House advisor Sebastian Gorka and talk radio hosts Laura Ingraham, Sean Hannity and Marc Levin.

Bannon was the featured speaker at the pro-Moore rally Monday night in Fairhope, Alabama. In his fascistic remarks, he made clear that his divergence from Trump on the Alabama race was not a sign of opposition to the president. He declared that those in attendance were assembled to "lift up and praise" Trump, and that "a vote for Judge Roy Moore is a vote for Donald J. Trump."

Bannon presented Moore as a political warrior for the "people" against the "global elites" and their "running dogs" in the media. He railed against the Republican establishment in Congress, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, calling them "the most corrupt and incompetent group of individuals in this country."

Bannon, a multi-millionaire former Goldman Sachs investment banker, made sure to throw red meat to his largely Evangelical audience, attributing Trump's election to "divine providence" and presenting the United States as part of the "Judeo-Christian West."

Among those who also stumped for Moore at the rally Monday night were Nigel Farage, former head of the far-right UK Independence Party, which led the campaign for Brexit, and Phil Robertson, Christian fundamentalist and star of the *Duck Dynasty* reality television show.

Yesterday's primary election was seen by establishment Republicans and the fascistic forces around Bannon as the spearhead of a broader challenge to the Republican Party from the far right. Now outside the White House, Trump's former chief strategist has declared that he is going to "go to war" for the president's "America-First" nationalist agenda.

With Moore's success in Alabama, primary challenges are expected to be launched against Republican incumbents in a number of significant Senate and House races. Reports indicate that Bannon has drawn up plans to challenge Mississippi Senator Roger Wicker, Nevada Senator Dean Heller and Arizona Senator Jeff Flake.

Another purported Bannon target, Tennessee Senator Bob Corker, announced Tuesday that he would retire at the end of his term in 2018, avoiding the likelihood of a primary challenge.

Bannon and his billionaire backers hope to use Moore's success and future primary challenges to advance their efforts to build a mass base for a fascist movement outside of the two-party system.

They rely on the accelerating lurch to the right of the Democratic Party and what passes for the "left" in US politics, which are openly hostile to and contemptuous of the working class, to create a political vacuum, allowing them to gain a hearing for their right-wing populist politics among alienated workers.

In the midst of Trump's escalating attacks on democratic rights at home and his military provocations abroad, the Democrats' overriding concern is the promotion of their hysterical, concocted campaign over alleged Russian interference in the 2016 election and Russian-inspired "fake news." The reactionary aims of this neo-McCarthyite campaign are to whip up sentiment for war against Russia and create the conditions for systematic censorship of the internet, so as to marginalize left-wing, anti-war and socialist views.

Moore's Democratic opponent, Doug Jones, a former US attorney for northern Alabama appointed by Bill Clinton, can be counted on to run a right-wing campaign and adapt himself to the nationalism of his far-right Republican opponent.



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