

US primaries choose Democratic, Republican nominees in seven states

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Primaries and runoff elections were held in seven states Tuesday. The results reflected growing political polarization in the United States, with the working class moving to the left while the two capitalist parties that hold a monopoly on the electoral system continue to move to the right.

The most striking result was the defeat of Representative Joseph Crowley, the fourth-ranking member of the Democratic leadership in the House of Representatives, by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (see today's Perspective).

Another rebuff to the Democratic Party establishment came in the race for the Maryland gubernatorial nomination, where former NAACP leader Benjamin Jealous defeated Rushern Baker, executive of Prince George's County, located in the Washington DC suburbs. Jealous was backed by Bernie Sanders and an influx of money from liberals in Hollywood, while Baker had the support of virtually the entire Maryland Democratic Party leadership.

In the primary for US Senate in Maryland, incumbent Democrat Ben Cardin won renomination easily, with 80 percent of the vote. Chelsea Manning, who served seven years in prison for supplying evidence of US war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan to WikiLeaks, finished second among eight candidates, with 32,205 votes, or 5.7 percent.

The more liberal candidate won the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in Colorado, as Representative Jared Polis defeated former state treasurer Cary Kennedy and two other candidates. Kennedy had more support in the Democratic Party establishment, but Polis, a multi-millionaire, was better funded.

Other states holding primaries included Utah and

Oklahoma, while Mississippi and South Carolina held runoff elections. Former Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney won the Republican nomination for the Senate seat in Utah being vacated by Orrin Hatch. The Republican governor of South Carolina, Henry McMaster, won renomination in a runoff against a multimillionaire opponent, John Warren.

Tuesday's vote chose Democratic and Republican nominees for a total of 55 congressional seats, 27 of them in New York state alone, eight in Maryland, seven in Colorado, five in Oklahoma, four in Utah, three (all runoffs) in South Carolina and one in Mississippi.

Crowley was one of three New York City Democratic incumbents to face significant opposition in the primary. Yvette Clarke, a six-term representative in a Brooklyn district, narrowly survived a challenge by Adem Bunkeddeko, the son of Ugandan immigrants. Carolyn Maloney, a 13-term representative from the wealthy east side of Manhattan, defeated a self-funding millionaire opponent, Suraj Patel, but fell below 60 percent of the vote.

In the only significant Republican contest in New York state, incumbent Representative Dan Donovan defeated former representative Michael Grimm, who sought to reclaim his Staten Island seat after serving a seven-month prison term for tax evasion. Donovan will face Democrat **Max Rose**, an Afghanistan war veteran, one of four candidates with military-intelligence backgrounds who won Democratic congressional nominations in competitive districts on Tuesday.

Jesse Colvin in the First Congressional District of Maryland will face incumbent Republican Representative Andy Harris. According to his campaign website, Colvin spent six years in Army intelligence, including four combat deployments in

Afghanistan and a year near the Demilitarized Zone between North Korea and South Korea.

His campaign biography declares, “As a Ranger, my four combat deployments in Afghanistan took place within a Joint Special Operations Task Force. I led intelligence teams whose work facilitated capture/kill missions of Taliban, al-Qaeda and other terrorist leaders. I managed a lethal drone program. I ran human intelligence sources. Every day, my team and I made dozens of decisions whose outcomes carried life and death consequences for my fellow Rangers, our Afghan partners, and Afghan civilians.”

Jason Crow won the Democratic nomination in Colorado’s Sixth Congressional District, one of the most closely contested in the country, where he will face incumbent Republican Representative Mike Coffman. Crow led a paratrooper platoon of the 82nd Airborne Division during the invasion of Iraq. He then joined the Army Rangers and served two tours in Afghanistan, where he rose to the rank of captain.

Max Della Pia, a retired Air Force officer and veteran of Operation Desert Shield (1990), Haiti and Afghanistan, then a brigadier general in the Air National Guard, had a narrow 26-vote lead in the contest for the Democratic nomination in New York’s 23rd Congressional District. His closest rival, **Tracy Mitrano**, is a Cornell professor and cybersecurity expert who has consulted for the national security apparatus and has a former CIA agent as campaign spokeswoman. Either way, the Democratic candidate to challenge incumbent Republican Tom Reed will have close ties to the military-intelligence complex.

Three other military-intelligence candidates were defeated, including David Pechefsky in the First District of New York. Pechefsky was formerly employed by the National Democratic Institute, a CIA front, in Liberia, Somalia and Iraq. He lost to self-funding multi-millionaire Perry Gershon. Patrick Ryan and Jeffrey Beals in the 19th District of New York lost to multi-millionaire attorney Antonio Delgado in a seven-way race.

There is now a six-week hiatus in the primary season until early August, when contests resume in the 18 states that have not yet selected nominees, including only two of the largest states, Michigan and Florida.

At this point, Democratic and Republican nominees have been selected for 306 out of 435 congressional

seats, or about 70 percent of the total. Of these, 96 are considered safely Republican and 131 safely Democratic, leaving 79 seats that are viewed as potentially competitive.

For those 79 seats, at least 24 of the Democratic Party nominees have backgrounds in the national-security apparatus, making them the largest single category, ahead of state and local government officials, lawyers or businessmen.



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