

Trump wins Iowa caucuses

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Three years after Donald Trump failed to stop the certification of the 2020 presidential election by laying siege to the US Capitol, the ex-president and would-be dictator won the Iowa caucuses in dominating fashion.

Trump garnered over 51 percent of the vote, earning him 20 delegates. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis placed second with 21 percent of the vote, accruing 9 delegates, while former South Carolina Governor and United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley placed third with 19 percent, good for 8 delegates.

Entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy finished fourth with 8 percent of the vote and 3 delegates. Ramaswamy and former Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, who finished a very distant fifth (0 percent), announced they were suspending their presidential campaigns after the votes were tallied. Ramaswamy has since endorsed Trump.

Monday's overall results were very favorable to the former president. While DeSantis finished second, his margin of defeat, more than 30 points, was the largest in Iowa caucuses history. Since announcing his campaign last year, DeSantis has plummeted in the polls, dropping from 40 percent in national averages to under 30 and never once besting Trump.

Despite the distant second-place finish, the Florida governor vowed to continue in the race, a boon for Trump, since it further splits the field, preventing non-Trump voters from consolidating behind Haley, who has positioned herself as more of an "anti-Trump" candidate compared to DeSantis.

Trump, DeSantis and Haley are all running on variations of Trump's reactionary and nationalist "Make America Great Again" program, with a heavy emphasis on anti-immigrant chauvinism. All of the candidates have pledged to continue building the US-Mexico border wall, provide billions to the border police and carry out mass deportations.

Haley, unlike Trump and, to a lesser extent, DeSantis, has pledged to continue unstinting US military funding for Ukraine.

While Trump dominated the contest, his victory does not mean that a mass fascist movement has materialized within the United States. It does, however, underscore the transformation of the Republican Party into a fascist party and the existence of a very real and menacing danger of dictatorship.

The caucuses are far from a representative sample of the electorate. In Iowa, only registered Republicans, of which there are some 752,000 in the state, could participate. By its nature, the caucus form of primary contest, in which eligible Republican voters gather at locations across the state and vote in person, mobilizes the active base of the party and reflects its political views. These tend today to be further to the right than the Republican Party's voters as a whole.

That said, the absence of any genuinely democratic or progressive alternative in the Democratic Party or the political establishment as a whole to the fascist right, resulting in a contest between different varieties of political reaction, enables the far right to benefit electorally. This is an international phenomenon, as seen in the election of Meloni in Italy, Milei in Argentina and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands and the growing strength of Le Pen in France and the Alternative for Germany in that country.

The entire bourgeois political establishment is lurching ever further to the right, with its nominal "left" wing increasingly embracing the extreme nationalist policies—on such issues as immigration—of the far right.

In the US elections, the "choice" being offered the working class at present by the capitalist two-party system is between the proponent of ever wider war, Biden, and the fascist Trump. Both are widely hated, with polls showing more than half of voters disgusted with the prospect of an election between Biden and Trump.

Freezing temperatures coupled with crumbling

infrastructure led to only 110,298 Iowans actually casting votes on Monday night, roughly 15 percent of those eligible, and less than 5 percent of the over 2 million eligible voters in the state. Fewer votes were cast on Monday than in any caucuses held in the previous 16 years.

While Trump received 56,260 votes in Monday's caucus, which was good enough for 51 percent, in 2016, he received some 11,000 fewer votes, 45,427, but that number represented only 24.3 percent of the vote total.

Trump consolidated his support across the state, winning every single county except Johnson County, the site of the University of Iowa. Trump lost Johnson county to Haley by one vote.

In his victory speech from Des Moines, Trump, called on his Republican challengers to drop out and for "everybody" to come together and support his campaign. Shelving his normal venomous tone, he cooed: "We want to come together, whether it's Republican or Democrat, or liberal or conservative, it would be so nice if we could come together and straighten out the world and straighten out the problems and straighten out all the death and destruction that we are witnessing..."

While DeSantis and Haley finished a distant second and third to Trump, receiving 23,420 and 21,085 votes, respectively, both candidates pledged to continue on to the New Hampshire primary, which is scheduled to be held on January 23. Unlike the Iowa caucuses, the New Hampshire contest is an open primary election, which allows voters not registered with either party to participate in the vote.

The latest polls show Haley roughly 10 points behind Trump, while DeSantis, who has pulled advertising in the state, is only polling in the single digits.

After New Hampshire, the next Republican contest is the Nevada primary and caucuses, which will be held on February 6 and 8 respectively. Trump and DeSantis are participating only in the caucuses, not in the primary election, while Haley is participating only in the primary. The state of Nevada is running the primary, while the Nevada Republican Party is running the caucuses. Delegates will be awarded only through the caucus process.

In addition to maintaining support within the

Republican base, Trump has gained endorsements from leading Republican legislators. Within minutes of the Iowa caucuses being called for Trump, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (Republican-Louisiana) released a statement congratulating Trump on the "resounding victory in Iowa."

Like Trump, Johnson called on his fellow Republicans to unite behind Trump, writing that his "decisive and historic victory tonight should move our Party closer to uniting so we can achieve the ultimate victory in November."

In addition to Johnson, Trump has already secured endorsements from over half of the Republican House, including Majority Leader Steve Scalise (Louisiana), Majority Whip Tom Emmer (Minnesota) and chair of the conference, Elise Stefanik (New York).

While Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (Kentucky) and second-ranking Republican Senator John Thune (South Dakota) have yet to endorse Trump, half of the Republican Senate already has. Following his victory Monday, Trump surrogate Lindsey Graham (South Carolina) tweeted that it was "clear to me—now more than ever—that Trump will be the Republican nominee and will eventually be the 47th President of the United States."

Republican senators who have already endorsed Trump include Tom Cotton (Arkansas), Josh Hawley (Missouri), Marco Rubio (Florida), Tommy Tuberville (Alabama) and J.D. Vance (Ohio).



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