

Ukraine war-hawk defeated in Florida Democratic primary

Patrick Martin
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In a stunning blow to the Democratic Party establishment, former lieutenant colonel Alexander Vindman, a central figure in backing the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, was defeated in Tuesday's primary election for US Senate by black state legislator Angie Nixon, who recently joined the Democratic Socialists of America.

Nixon won by a comfortable 12 percentage points, despite being heavily outraised and outspent by Vindman, who largely ignored his challenger, refused to debate her or appear alongside her at candidate forums, and stockpiled millions in financial resources for the fall campaign in which he will now not be a candidate.

Turnout for the mid-August primary was low, with fewer Democrats going to the polls in Florida than in Michigan two weeks earlier, although Florida has more than twice the population. But Nixon swept her home city of Jacksonville and the entire northern part of the state, which is more heavily African American, while winning all the state's major urban areas, including Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, and Tampa-St. Petersburg.

Nixon also won large majorities among young voters and minority and working class voters, with Vindman winning only in the most affluent and conservative areas, including Palm Beach County on the Atlantic Coast, and the Sarasota-Bradenton-Naples area on the Gulf Coast.

The two-term state legislator did not emphasize her affiliation with the DSA, which she joined only in June, and the DSA did not endorse her. Her campaign was focused on the high cost-of-living, a \$25-an-hour national minimum wage, and Medicare for all. She also opposed US aid to Israel and condemned the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

Nixon had also engaged in highly publicized opposition to the gerrymandering of Florida's congressional districts by Governor Ron DeSantis, which eliminated two black-majority districts in south Florida and a total of four Democratic-held districts in all. She was arrested for staging a sit-in at DeSantis office and faces a trial next month.

While Nixon won narrowly in south Florida, two right-wing pro-Israel Democratic representatives retained their seats against DSA-backed opponents. Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz defeated Elijah Manley and several other candidates in a majority-minority district created after her own district was eliminated by the gerrymander.

Representative Jared Moskowitz defeated Oliver Larkin, a DSA member, by a 2-1 margin, also in a new district created by the redrawing of boundaries.

There were bitter conflicts involving both campaigns, as Zionist groups sought to block campaign appearances by Representative Rashida Tlaib, a Michigan Democrat who is the only Palestinian-American in Congress, on behalf of Manley and Larkin. Two venues canceled campaign rallies for Tlaib, Larkin, Manley and Nixon, although the event was finally held in a third location. The candidates issued a joint statement denouncing the "vile and Islamophobic intimidation campaign from right-wing agitators and conservative Democrats," who demanded that Tlaib be disinvited.

The Democratic Party establishment found itself with statewide candidates from opposite ends of the party after Tuesday's voting, with former Republican congressman David Jolly winning the Democratic nomination for governor, and immediately disavowing any association with socialism. "Look I reject the DSA," he said. "I reject socialism. I am a capitalist and

I think capitalism provides the greatest amount of economic mobility.”

At the same time, he agreed to appear with Nixon at a party unity event, saying, “She was talking about the basic economic opportunities and empowerment of more people. She really was very disciplined. So, where we can agree on those messages, we’re going to work together.”

For her part, Nixon followed up her victory with an immediate disavowal of the platform of the DSA, telling the Morning Joe interview program on MS NOW that she opposed such slogans as “defunding police,” “abolishing prisons” and “open borders,” although she repeated her opposition to US aid to Israel.

Nixon did not make Ukraine an issue in the campaign, given that the Democratic Party is unalterably committed to support for the US-NATO war against Russia. But Vindman’s own campaign could not be separated from it.

A Ukrainian-born career US military officer who was in charge of the Ukraine desk at the White House National Security Council, Vindman played a central role in the 2019 impeachment of Donald Trump. He testified about the circumstances surrounding the phone call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, in which Trump demanded Zelensky dig up dirt on Democrat Joe Biden. Trump briefly held up US military aid to Ukraine to put pressure on Zelensky.

Vindman and his twin brother Eugene became celebrities in Democratic Party circles, where opposition to Trump during his first term was centered on demands for a tougher foreign policy line against Russia and in support of Ukraine, where a right-wing, pro-US regime came to power in 2014 in the so-called Maidan revolution, a fascist-led coup that ousted the elected pro-Russian president. That operation, and overall push to expand NATO into former Soviet territory, were the main focus of the Democratic Obama-Biden administration (2009-2016) and taken up again under the Biden-Harris administration (2021-2024).

In 2024, Eugene Vindman, like his brother a career Army officer and fervent advocate of military support to Ukraine, was elected to Congress in Virginia, where he succeeded Democrat Abigail Spanberger, the former

CIA agent who is now the state’s governor. Alex Vindman was the choice of the Florida Democratic Party leadership to run for even higher office—the Florida US Senate seat previously occupied by Marco Rubio, now the US secretary of state. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis appointed state attorney general Ashley Moody to fill the vacancy, and Moody won the Republican nomination Tuesday.

Trump himself celebrated the result of the Florida primary—in which he voted by mail—with a social media post denouncing Vindman as “a real treasonous creep” and Nixon, in openly racist terms, as “a Radical Left Lunatic, who can’t speak or think properly.” This from the president whose lunacy and “inability to speak or think properly” are so obvious—and his right-wing, militaristic policies so detested—that his approval rating has fallen to a record low of only 33 percent.

Several Republican primary candidates lost their races Tuesday despite Trump’s endorsement, something that has become more common in recent weeks. These included Representative Cory Mills of Florida, defeated for renomination after a scandal involving sexual harassment of congressional staff, as well as a congressional candidate in Florida and a gubernatorial candidate in Wyoming.



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