



SSN Forum on the Future of the Republican Party

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Almost weekly, pundits intone last rites for the Tea Party. But GOP officeholders have bolted far right on almost every issue. And primary election surprises keep happening – like the ouster of House Majority Leader Eric Cantor and the bare survival of Republican Senate war horse Thad Cochran. SSN scholars Christopher Parker, Robert Boatright, Vanessa Williamson, Amy Fried, Daniel Paul Franklin, and Theda Skocpol debate what it all means for Republicans in state and national politics.

A SUICIDAL REPUBLICAN CIVIL WAR

Christopher S. Parker, University of Washington

"Policy differences within the Republican Party today matter as much as win and loss tallies in primary and general elections. If Congressional Republicans continue to let the Tea Party's nativist preferences control the legislative agenda on immigration reform, they will lose an opportunity to help deliver comprehensive immigration reforms that most Americans... consider vital for America and the future viability of the Republican Party at the national level."

CANTOR'S DEFEAT IS NO BIG DEAL – UNLESS REPUBLICANS CHOOSE TO MAKE IT SO

Robert G. Boatright, Clark University

"Primaries, in short, are weird elections, and there are a lot of them, making it easy for groups to score points here or there in every election year. That doesn't mean that big generalizations about the direction of entire political parties or American politics overall should be read into scattered primary outcomes."

REPUBLICANS ARE DEFERRING TO TEA PARTY FUNDERS AND ACTIVISTS

Vanessa Williamson, Harvard University

"The Republicans' swerve to the far right is a recipe for local victories but national defeats. Eventually, this version of the Republican Party will discover it cannot attract majorities in national or many state-wide general elections."

WHAT THE WAR WITHIN THE GOP MEANS IN MAINE

Amy Fried, University of Maine

"Whatever actually happens some months from now, Maine's GOP will probably continue to face schisms between compromise-minded center-right Republicans, the traditional Maine 'establishment,' and libertarians and Tea Partiers positioned further to the right and much less open to governing across party lines."

DID THE MAGNOLIA STATE'S PRIMARY BATTLES SIGNAL NEW LEVERAGE FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS?

Daniel Paul Franklin, Georgia State University

"With the emergence of the Tea Party movement, somewhat more moderate Mississippi Republicans have found it increasingly challenging to win primaries. Yet now it is apparent that they have a new path to victory – one that runs through the African American community."

TEA PARTY FORCES STILL CONTROL THE REPUBLICAN AGENDA

Theda Skocpol, Harvard University

"The hard truth the Beltway media tries to avoid facing is that the U.S. Republican Party has moved, and remains, far from where mainstream American voters stand on virtually all of the major public policy issues of the day. That matters hugely for what the U.S. federal and many state governments can and will do about major public policy challenges, because the Republican Party is one of just two major players in U.S. government."

To read all six SSN Scholars' contributions on a single page, [click here](#).