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*Number 720, March 10, 2008*

## Clues in the Texas Returns

The Texas presidential primaries on March 4, usually held too late to have a significant impact on the outcomes, were crucial this year for both parties. On the closely watched Democratic side, Texas -- along with Ohio -- kept **Hillary Clinton** in the race, just as the polls taken by InsiderAdvantage-Majority Opinion Research had forecast. The InsiderAdvantage final poll, taken March 2 and the first to show Clinton ahead, gave her 49% to **Barack Obama**'s 44%, with 7% undecided, close to the actual result of Clinton's victory of 51% (1,495,814) to 47% (1,358,785). As for convention delegates, Clinton won 65, Obama 61.

Reversing Obama's 12-state winning streak, Clinton won big in Texas among Latinos (63% to 35%) and white women (59% to 40%). Latinos -- mostly Mexican-Americans -- accounted for 30% of the Texas Democratic turnout. Obama's strength was concentrated among African Americans, with 85% to 15% for Clinton. Black voters accounted for 19% of the turnout.

Clinton ran stronger among white men than she has in other states with 50% to Obama's 49%. If Obama ends up with the nomination, this group may be his Achilles' heel, especially

in the South (although exit polls showed a similar trend in Ohio).

For the GOP, **John McCain** clinched the presidential nomination, winning 80 delegates in Texas to Mike Huckabee's 16. In the popular vote, McCain received 709,477 votes (51%) to Huckabee's 523,553 (38%).

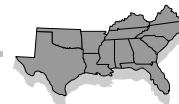
Given the heated battle still raging for the nomination, a larger Democratic turnout was expected. But the more than two-to-one turnout advantage for the Democrats -- 2,868,454 to 1,384,662 for the GOP -- is an early omen that this November's elections in Texas are likely to be more competitive than in the recent past.

### Other Races

Not everyone in Texas was focused on the presidential primaries results. Lone Star voters also chose nominees for the US Senate and for Congress and there were a number of hotly contested races.

### US Senate

The US Senate primaries mostly lived up to their foregone conclusions, with US Sen. **John**



**Cornyn** (R) winning renomination by a Russian-style nearly five-to-one margin. Cornyn received 991,474 (81%) to unknown challenger **Larry Kilgore**'s 225,258 (19%).

For the Democrats, however, a runoff almost happened. Heavy favorite state Rep. **Rick Noriega** (D) had 1,108,318 (51%) to perennial candidate -- and movie star namesake -- **Gene Kelly**'s 583,845 (27%), Corpus Christi teacher **Ray McMurrey**'s 268,742 (12%) and **Rhett Smith**'s 211,811 (10%).

### Texas 3 (Plano, etc.)

US Rep. **Sam Johnson** (R), 77, triumphed over two unknown primary foes. Johnson had 35,990 (87%) to retired airline pilot **Harry Pierce**'s 3,456 (8%) and controller/author **Wayne Avellanet**'s 1,945 (5%). In the Democratic Primary, attorney **Tom Daley** had 33,529 (72%) to 13,282 (28%) for **Ron Minkow**, who is retired.

### Texas 4 (Rockwall, etc.)

Thirteen-term US Rep. **Ralph Hall** (R), 84, was another veteran amassing an overwhelming majority. Hall received 42,212 (73%) to Frisco's ex-mayor **Kathy Seei**'s 5,870 (10%), NASCAR team owner **Gene Christensen**'s 5,556 (10%), businessman and a self-described "born-again Bible believer" **Kevin George**'s 3,035 (5%), and ex-congressional staffer **Joshua Kowert**'s 857 (1%). For the Democrats, history professor **Glenn Melancon**, who got 33% in 2006 against Hall, won with 37,409 (57%) to former prosecutor **Valinda Hathcox**'s 27,752 (43%).

### Texas 10 (Austin, etc.)

Two Democrats waged a spirited campaign for the nomination to oppose US Rep. **Mike McCaul** (R), who won by 55% to 41% in

2006. Texas Justice TV judge **Larry Joe Doherty** won with 51,937 (61%) to foreign affairs expert **Dan Grant**'s 33,043 (39%).

### Texas 14 (Galveston, etc.)

US Rep. **Ron Paul** (R), 72, may not have won the presidential contest yesterday, but he did win renomination -- and in effect, re-election -- to Congress by an impressive margin. Paul had 37,220 (70%) to Friendswood mayor pro tem **Chris Peden**'s 15,813 (30%). Although Paul won renomination, he did not carry his district in the presidential contest. In the White House race, McCain led the 14<sup>th</sup> District Republican balloting with 49%, followed by Huckabee with 32%. Paul came in third with 12%.

### Texas 22 (Sugar Land, etc.)

In **Tom DeLay**'s old district, freshman **Nick Lampson** (D) won in 2006 by a slim 52%, even though his GOP foe ran as a write-in. On the Republican side, ten candidates competed for one of the few Democratic seats likely to switch sides this November. **Shelley Sekula-Gibbes**, who served two months of DeLay's last term, and **Pete Olson**, a former top aide to US Sen. John Cornyn (R) and ex-US Sen. **Phil Gramm** (R), will face off in an April 8 runoff. The primary vote:

Sekula-Gibbes	16,681 (30%)
Olsen	11,639 (21%)
John Manlove	8,388 (15%)
Robert Talton	8,163 (15%)
Dean Hrbacek	5,864 (10%)
Cynthia Dunbar	2,114 (4%)
Brian Klock	992 (2%)
Jim Squier	989 (2%)
Kevyn Bazzy	879 (2%)
Ryan Rowley	424 (1%)

A hotly contested campaign for the April 8 runoff began to develop rapidly after the



primary. According to *Roll Call* newspaper, three of the Republican members of Congress from Texas have endorsed Olson “with more of their colleagues expected to follow suit.” Sekula-Gibbs raised hackles during her brief congressional tenure, causing a massive walk out of much of DeLay’s staff and earning her considerable bad press. She is expected to tag Olson, who spent some 20 years in the Navy and working in Washington before moving back to the district two years ago. In any case, the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) has targeted the district.

### Texas 23 (San Antonio, etc.)

In 2006, former US Rep. **Ciro Rodriguez** (D) won a special election runoff, ousting incumbent **Henry Bonilla** (R) by 54% to 46% in this GOP leaning district (President Bush 57% in 2004). In yesterday’s GOP primary, Bexar County Commissioner **Lyle Larson** won the nomination to try to unseat Rodriguez with 18,432 (62%) to lawyer/banker GOP activist **Francisco “Quico” Canseco’s** 11,516 (38%). Some folks think Canseco, a Latino in this 65% Hispanic district, would have been a stronger candidate. In his concession, Canseco declined to endorse Larson. Nevertheless, the NRCC has targeted this district also.

### Speaker Craddick Holds His Own

Of some 15 primaries for state representative that turned in part on the candidates’ position favoring or opposing re-election of House Speaker **Tom Craddick**, seven were won by pro-Craddick candidates, eight by candidates opposed to the Speaker. Of the five pro-Craddick Democrats targeted by the anti-Speaker House Democratic Leadership, four won their primaries; only one lost. The Lone Star consensus is that Craddick looks safer in the speaker’s chair than he did before the primary, but if Democrats make significant

gains in the state House in November, which they could do, he could face a major challenge.

## US Senate Updates

### Kentucky: Fischer Claims Lead

**Greg Fischer**, a wealthy businessman (soft drink dispensers) is not the best known candidate for the Democratic nomination to oppose Senate Minority Leader **Mitch McConnell** (R-KY). But this week Fischer released a poll showing he is ahead of his main competitor, fellow millionaire **Bruce Lunsford** -- once the pollster read biographical paragraphs about each candidate. Before the voters received the biographical information, Lunsford had 37%, Fischer 22%. After the paragraphs were read, Fischer led 44% to 39% for Lunsford. The poll was taken for Fischer by Global Strategy Group from February 28 through March 2. A month ago, a Lunsford poll showed him with 44% to 4% for Fischer -- and 11% for **Andrew Horne**, since withdrawn. They pay their money and you take your choice. Fischer, incidentally, did gain the support of a Kentucky chapter of the American Federation of Teachers.

### North Carolina: Dole Polls Poorly

The latest Elon University Poll, taken February 18-21, shows that only 37% of respondents plan to vote for US Sen. **Elizabeth Dole** (R-NC) in November, weak for an incumbent. Another 25% plan to vote against her and 37% either don’t know or say it’s too early to tell. Nevertheless, 51% approve of Dole’s performance in office, so she has room to get re-elected. Democrats will choose their candidate to oppose Dole in a May 6 primary in which state Sen. **Kay Hagen** is favored over investment banker **Jim Neal**.



## Tennessee: Tuke Re-Enters Senate Race

Nashville lawyer **Bob Tuke**, 60, a former state Democratic chairman who took his name out of consideration as a potential foe for US Sen. **Lamar Alexander** (R), has re-entered the race. Tuke, **Barack Obama**'s Tennessee political director, made his official announcement on March 4. He will face **Mike Padgett** in the August 7 Democratic Primary. Padgett, a Clinton supporter, is a former Knox County clerk of court. Both Tuke and Padgett have close ties to Gov. **Phil Bredesen** (D). Alexander, who has a number of Volunteer State Democrats in his corner, remains the favorite. The filing deadline is on April 3.

## US House Updates

### Alabama 2: Starting Gate Getting Crowded

Eight-term US Rep. **Terry Everett** (R) is not seeking re-election in Alabama's 2<sup>nd</sup> District (Montgomery, Dothan, etc.) and at least six Republicans and one Democrat have already announced they will run to succeed him. The contenders for the GOP nomination are state Sen. **Harri Anne Smith**, state Rep. **Jay Love**, state Rep. **David Grimes**, television station owner **David Woods**, oral surgeon **Craig Schmidtke** and businessman **John Martin** (R). Smith, a leading contender, is from the populated Wiregrass region of the district. Although she had raised \$18,000 by year's end and had spent all of it, she has a major fundraiser on tap. Love had \$370,000 on hand, including a \$300,000 loan from his personal funds. According to the Montgomery Advertiser, Love plans a campaign budget of \$750,000 to \$1 million. Grimes, who has multiple sclerosis, is an active member of the state House. Woods, who owns the Fox affiliate in Montgomery, is the son of a prominent businessman who ran unsuccessfully for public office.

Although **President Bush** carried the district with 67% in 2004, the Democrats are planning a major effort here. Montgomery Mayor **Bobby Bright** (D) has announced his candidacy and is expected to mount a strong, well-financed campaign. For a while, Bright flirted with the idea of running as a Republican; though this confounded the GOP establishment, it may contribute to Bright's goal of presenting himself as an independent Democrat, which would be more acceptable than a regular Democrat in this Republican district. One problem: Though Bright owns property in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District, he resides outside of it and will have to move into the district. The filing deadline is April 4, the primary on June 3, with a runoff -- if needed -- on July 15.

### Georgia 10: Another Entry?

State Sen. **Nancy Schaefer** (R) is expected to announce this week whether she will enter the race for congress against freshman **Paul Broun** (R) in the 10<sup>th</sup> District (Athens, etc.). The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported last week that Schaefer had run a poll and is considering the race. Broun, who won an upset victory by a narrow 50.4% in a special election runoff last year, already has another significant opponent, state House Majority Whip **Barry Fleming**, who had \$488,000 cash on hand at year's end to Broun's \$125,000. Geography could also play a significant role. Broun is strong in the Athens area, Fleming in Augusta, and Schaefer in the northeast corner of the district, an area that Broun carried last year. She is also popular with Christian fundamentalists, a major part of Broun's base. Democrat **Bobby Saxon** is also running in this Republican district (Bush 65% in 2004). The filing deadline is May 2, the primary July 15, and a runoff, if needed, on August 15.



### Mississippi 3: Money Talks, but ...

In the contest in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District (Natchez, etc.) to succeed US Rep. **Chip Pickering** (R), former US Sen. **Trent Lott** (R) attended a fundraiser for **Gregg Harper**, chairman of the Rankin County GOP, while Pickering showed up at a fundraiser for his former aide, **John Rounsaville**, reports Washington's *Roll Call* newspaper. Meanwhile, state Sen. **Charlie Ross** is getting help from the Club for Growth.

And wealthy businessman (financial services) **David Landrum** has put some \$470,000 of his own money into the race, but is catching flak for not voting in a number of recent elections. Landrum, who is dominating the TV air waves in this eight-candidate contest, made the matter worse when his campaign released documents from the voter roll for 2003 that included the signatures of Landrum and his wife. Then the Jackson *Clarion-Ledger* revealed they were not genuine signatures. Now the betting is that on March 11, former favorite Landrum will be forced into an April 1 runoff with either ex-Pickering staffer Rounsaville; Ross or Harper.

### North Carolina: McHenry, Miller Draw Primary Foes

Second-term Congressman **Patrick McHenry** (R) of North Carolina's 10<sup>th</sup> District (Hickory, etc.) has drawn a challenge in the May 6 Republican Primary. **Lance Sigmon**, an attorney who returned to the district in 2005 after he retired from a career in the Air Force, has already run a television spot accusing McHenry of claiming he owned a non-existent real estate business when he first ran for congress in 2004 and of buying a house for less than its appraised value from a campaign donor. Although many local GOP officials backed other contenders when McHenry initially won election to congress nearly four years ago, Sigmon has not so far attracted

support from party leaders and had no cash on hand at the end of 2007. McHenry had \$203,000. McHenry won reelection with 62% in 2006 and at 32 is still the youngest member of Congress.

Two contenders have filed in the Democratic Primary. At year's end, prosecuting attorney **Daniel Johnson** had \$119,000 on hand and engineer **Steve Ivester** had \$15,000. Bush won the district with 67% in 2004.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> District (Raleigh, etc.), third-term **Brad Miller** (D) will face Republican former state Sen. **Hugh Webster**, a political antagonist from the time the two served in the state Senate together. During his 12 years in the state Senate, Webster became a leader in the fight against illegal immigration, including supporting measures to prevent illegal aliens from getting drivers' licenses. He's already gotten an endorsement from neighboring GOP Congresswoman **Virginia Foxx**. In 2004 Miller defeated black Republican **Vernon Robinson**, a gadfly with considerable sting, by 64% to 36%, but the district is only marginally Democratic: **John Kerry** won it 52%-47% in 2004; Bush beat Gore 50% to 49% in 2000. At the end of 2007, Miller had \$239,000 on hand.

Incidentally, when the Tar Heel State's filing deadline passed on February 29, one name familiar to old-timers cropped up: **Sam Ervin IV**, grandson of the late senator, is running for a state Supreme Court seat.

### Virginia 11: A Hot Democratic Primary

Two prominent Democrats are running to succeed 14-year incumbent **Tom Davis** (R) in Virginia's 11<sup>th</sup> District (Fairfax County, etc.). Former US Rep. **Leslie Byrne** (D), who narrowly lost a bid for lieutenant governor in 2005, and Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman **Gerry Connolly** have



both announced. Byrne, who had \$104,000 on hand at year's end, has the financial backing of EMILY's List. Connolly has long been a political powerhouse in Fairfax County. **Doug Denny**, a Navy veteran and former Capitol Hill aide, is also running as a Democrat; he had \$14,000 on hand. For the GOP, businessman **Keith Fimian**, with \$656,000 at year's end, was first out of the gate. The filing deadline is April 11, the primary June 10.

## Grits

**? Clinton, Obama Divide Dixie's Democratic Lawmakers.** Southern Democratic members of Congress are almost evenly divided between supporters of **Hillary Clinton** and backers of **Barack Obama**. Of the 36 Southern senators and representative who have endorsed a Democratic presidential candidate, 19 are for Obama, 16 for Clinton, according to *The Hill* newspaper's latest list of congressional endorsements. Of Southern African-American representatives, eight are behind Obama -- including the recently switched John Lewis (GA), five for Clinton. The South's white Democratic lawmakers are evenly divided, eleven for each candidate. On the GOP side, 28 Southern Republican members of Congress have endorsed **John McCain**; only three are backing **Mike Huckabee** and none are supporting **Ron Paul**.

**? Dixie for McCain?** The latest presidential poll, taken for The Cook Political Report by Thom Riehle and RT Strategies February 28-March 2, shows that nationwide, **Obama** leads **McCain** by 47% to 38%. In the South, however, it's the reverse: McCain leads 47% to 38%, the only region that Obama loses. In addition, two recent polls in Southern states show that McCain is the likely victor over either Obama or Clinton, but may not be a safe bet in at least one of them. In Alabama, a

*Mobile Press-Register/University of South Alabama* survey taken February 11-14 showed McCain would defeat Obama by 59% to 31% and would beat Clinton by 58% to 29%. In Florida, McCain also leads, but his margin is much narrower. A Quinnipiac University poll taken February 6-12 found McCain leading Clinton 44% to 42% and leading Obama 41% to 39% -- much too close for GOP comfort.

**? Alabama: Davis for Governor?** US Rep. **Artur Davis** (D), who represents Alabama's 7<sup>th</sup> District (Birmingham, etc.), has long held statewide ambitions. He decided not to run against US Sen. **Jeff Sessions** (R) this year, but **Obama's** victory in the state's Democratic Primary, with strong backing from African-American Davis, has created talk that Davis might seek the governorship in 2006. Davis, a Harvard graduate, is one of a group of members of the Congressional Black Caucus who have pursued a moderate, often pro-business, voting record.

**? Kentucky: Beshear's Gamble.** Newly inaugurated Gov. **Steve Beshear** (D) won the Kentucky governorship in part by championing an expansion of legal gambling in the state in lieu of higher taxes to help pay for needed improvements in education and other programs. So far, however, Beshear has not moved into a clear lead on the issue. His proposed ballot initiative, which provides for 12 casinos in the state, has already met with strong opposition in the Republican-controlled Senate. In the Democratic-controlled House, the leadership has not yet signed on to the governor's proposal. And the issue helped the GOP win a recent special election for a state senate seat. Beshear's ace in the hole, however, is the state's need for new sources of revenue, and a general reluctance to either raise taxes or cut current programs.