



Written by [Mary McHugh](#) on June 24, 2010

Nikki Haley Wins S.C. Republican Nomination for Governor

Standing in front of the entrance to the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum the night of June 23, State Representative Nikki Haley gave a victory speech. With a 65-35 winning percentage, she had just handily defeated her runoff opponent, four-term U.S. Congressman J. Gresham Barrett, to become the Republican nominee for Governor of South Carolina in the coming November election. Haley will be facing State Senator Vincent Sheheen, the Democratic nominee.



Just two weeks ago Haley had almost enough of a majority vote to win the outright nod over three fellow Republicans at 49.5 percent. With yesterday's victory, she is favored to defeat her Democratic opponent in the fall.

During today's "unity breakfast," her former rivals Barrett and Atty. Gen. Henry McMaster — third candidate Andre Bauer was a no-show — both promised to stand behind her candidacy. And saying that the campaign represents the public's desire to have a more accountable government and a government that understands the value of a dollar, Ms. Haley added, "This party understands what the people want. The entire country is watching us and saying, 'That's how you do it.' We're going to show the entire country what a good, conservative, pro-business state looks like."

Nikki Haley began her campaign having unlikely prospects, due to financial backing dire enough that selling yard signs at \$5 a piece became a necessary strategy. In fact, last night she recounted South Carolina's initial, snowballing response with praise, saying:

And I want to thank the good people of this state ... when there were just ten people in a room and I went to you and I said, "If you like my message, go out and tell ten people." And you did. And I will never forget that. Because those ten people told ten more people and they told ten more people — and this was the best grass roots underdog campaign we have ever seen!

But the time for such candidates has come and not a moment too soon. With the American people appearing to wake up at last to the fact that it is very late indeed to save our republic from the conclusion of its socialist if not communist slide, they are now more constitutionally educated and patriotically motivated — and willing to vote "outside the box" in elections at every level. In South Carolina for example, it appears that yesterday they made Congressman Barrett pay for his Washington bailout TARP vote of unhappy memory. They also decided to ignore accusations of infidelity against Nikki Haley, a married mother of two, which came from two different men having connections with the old South Carolina Republican network.



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Gov. Mark Sanford had reached his term limit and could not run again. Though just coming out of an admitted scandal himself, Sanford was known as a fiscal conservative and was mentor to a few public officials such as Haley. Despite the Sanford's personal problems, his popular wife, Jenny, came forward to support Haley — a gesture engendering confidence for the candidate throughout the state. Said the [New York Times](#) in recounting her political career:

Ms. Haley became part of a small cadre of small-government advocates who are ideologically aligned with Mr. Sanford and at odds with the rest of the state's Republican establishment, whom they accuse of abandoning conservative principles. Like the governor, she has repeatedly taken her case to the public, sometimes embarrassing legislative leaders and helping her develop a loyal following. And, as with Mr. Sanford, that has led to accusations of grandstanding.

Though brought up in Bamberg, South Carolina, while in politics Ms. Haley had to overcome being a first-generation Indian-American candidate from a Sikh family. Her father was a biology professor in nearby Voorhees College and her mother's clothing and accessory company, Exotica International, is now a multi-million dollar endeavor. It was here that Haley started bookkeeping at age 13. Though she is now a Methodist and married to Michael Haley, whom she met at Clemson while obtaining her accounting degree, her opponents used Nikki Haley's Indian-Sikh background against her in the campaign.

Additionally, another possible drawback was that Haley was one of the few female politicians serving in South Carolina, a state with the lowest number of women officials in the United States. Sarah Palin's arrival in the state to very visibly help the campaign was therefore both welcomed and effective. Ms. Haley also received support early on from former Massachusetts governor and 2008 Presidential candidate Mitt Romney. And, as has become almost a norm in recent months, Tea Party activists and the many sympathetic voters sharing their concerns, recognized in her the candidate they could best trust to represent them in the governor's office. With the ensuing support and campaign help this engendered, they were instrumental in her victory as well. Constitutional conservatives are hoping they will not be disappointed.

Photo of Nikki Haley: AP Images



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