



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on May 6, 2012

Ron Paul Dominates Maine, Nevada State Conventions

Ron Paul forces staged organizational coups this weekend in [Nevada](#) and [Maine](#), where they won a majority of the delegates who will represent their states at the Republican National Convention in Tampa. In addition, Paul won most of the delegates thus far selected by the Iowa GOP. The coups follow up Paul campaign victories [a week earlier](#) in Louisiana and Massachusetts, where Paul supporters dominated district caucuses.

In Massachusetts, where Mitt Romney won the primary by a huge margin earlier in the year, all Ron Paul supporters chosen as delegates to the national convention are pledged to vote for Romney on the first ballot. In Nevada, most of the Paul delegates are bound to support Romney on the first ballot. However, in other states, such as Maine and Iowa, the delegates are not bound by the earlier state contests.

The *Portland Press-Herald* [reported](#) May 5 that Paul supporters in Maine succeeding in electing their own state convention chairman over the GOP establishment's choice by a mere four votes, demonstrating their clout and setting the tone for the rest of the convention. "Paul supporter Brent Tweed edged Charles Cragin 1,118 to 1,114 in a very close vote," the *Portland Press-Herald* reported.

The two-day convention then went on to [elect as delegates](#) 21 Paul supporters who will comprise 87.5 percent of the state's 24-member delegation to Tampa. This lop-sided Paul victory occurred despite a narrow official Romney win of about 100 votes in caucuses earlier in the year (though there were numerous voting [irregularities](#) that could have changed the vote total). Paul supporters have essentially taken over the Maine GOP, though some Paul supporters found the term a bit dramatic. "Takeover is strong word; we're all registered Republicans here," Paul supporter Matthew McDonald [told](#) the *Bangor Daily News*. "But Chairman Webster called Ron Paul supporters wingnuts, he saw us as a fringe minority; now we hold the power of the convention."

In Nevada, the same happened May 5-6. The Ron Paul campaign [won](#) 22 of the 28 Nevada delegates and gained control of much of the state and municipal party leadership. And Paul supporters accomplished this despite [threats](#) from the Republican National Committee not to nominate too many Ron Paul supporters and some fraud by Romney supporters. Some Romney supporters at the Reno convention [distributed a fake slate of Ron Paul supporters](#) seeking delegate spots to blunt the Paul assault. "The list included some Paul supporters but hidden among the Paul supporters were obvious Romney supporters," according to Ray Hagar of the *Reno Gazette-Journal*.

Because Romney won the caucus earlier in the year, the RNC faxed a [letter](#) last week demanding that "an authorized representative of the presidential campaign that the delegate or prospective delegate



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professes to support should be allowed to confirm whether or not the delegate is an actual supporter” of the campaign he’s nominally representing. In other words, the RNC demanded that “Romney” delegates be selected by the Romney campaign, rather than merely Ron Paul delegates who have pledged to support Romney on the first ballot.

But the state convention did not bow to the RNC, and Nevada Ron Paul Chairman Carl Bunce [sloughed off](#) the letter as “a creative writing assignment given to them by the Romney campaign to threaten the Paul supporters and Ron Paul campaign. It’s ridiculous. It is nothing more than a veiled threat.” The *Reno Gazette-Journal* [revealed](#), “No matter who is elected as national delegates, 20 of them will be bound by RNC rules to vote for Romney on the first ballot at the national convention, and eight will vote for Paul.” But that doesn’t mean delegates would be bound to their alleged candidate after the first ballot.

Ironically, the Ron Paul campaign is benefiting from changes many state GOP organizations made in their convention rules in 2009-11. Many of these rule changes were enacted to benefit former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney (see [here](#) and [here](#)), who was the presumed nominee with what most believed to be the best party organization in every state from his 2008 run. But Ron Paul had retained his organization from the 2008 race, and is out-organizing Romney supporters.

In Iowa, where the state GOP has not yet held its state convention but did select some delegates this weekend, the *Des Moines Register* [reported](#) that most of them are Ron Paul supporters: “Of the 13 delegates and 13 alternates elected today [Saturday, May 5] for the national convention, just one has publicly endorsed Mitt Romney for president — Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad. And just three others publicly supported Rick Santorum, who won the Iowa caucuses but is no longer in the race.... Ten of the 13 [delegates] have expressed public support for Paul, such as by donating money or volunteering for his campaign.” The *Des Moines Register* [concluded](#) that “Paul, who won third place in the Iowa caucuses, could end up with the best Iowa representation at the national convention when it comes time to vote for the GOP presidential nominee.”

Photo of GOP state convention in Maine: AP Images



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