



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 22, 2011

South Carolina Refuses to Fund GOP Pres. Primary

Struggling with budget deficits, the state of South Carolina announced that it will not be funding the GOP's first in-the-South presidential primary in February. The GOP contends, however, that it will move forward with the primary regardless of the cost, even if the Republican Party must raise \$1.5 million to run it.



Matt Moore, GOP executive director of South Carolina, asserts, "In no way is this primary in jeopardy."

Republican Governor Nikki Haley (pictured) insists that taxpayer funds be used for "core functions," of which she contends primaries are not.

"Political parties have sufficient fundraising ability to offset the costs of partisan presidential preference primaries, and in a budget year like this one, it is my task that we do not dedicate taxpayer dollars to something I believe does not rise to the level of a core function of government," said Haley.

Fox News explains:

The party could go back to running the primary with paper ballots and volunteers, which is how it was done until 2008. That year, Republicans and Democrats pushed for and won state funding for the wide-open [White House](#) primaries and the state election commission started running them.

A measure that would have allowed the election commission to run the primaries and bill the [GOP](#) was axed last week during final budget negotiations.

In response to Haley's objections, the election commission requested from the state Attorney General that it use leftover money from last year's elections — \$680,000—to pay for the primary. The Attorney General has not yet responded.

Likewise, the GOP has continued to pursue state funding for the primary. Moore indicates that the GOP is reaching out "to make clear that state involvement is wise to ensure the election is fair and unbiased."

Moore reiterates that the primary will go forward with or without the leftover election commission money.

"That's the governor's prerogative. We respect that," said Moore. "No matter what, we're going to put on this primary. We're committed to raising any funds beyond what the state may provide."

Thus far, the GOP has raised \$125,000 through filing fees from five candidates and is expected to receive another \$35,000 on Wednesday when former Utah Governor Jon Huntsman launches his presidential bid.

However, even with those funds, the Republican Party will have to raise significantly more money. The South Carolina GOP currently has approximately \$137,000 on hand.



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A date has not yet been set for the primary, but the South Carolina Republican Party is expected to be working feverishly to overcome this obstacle.



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