



Written by on June 17, 2010

Texas GOP Convention Elects Chairman, Opposes Amnesty

At the 2010 Republican Party of Texas (RPT) State Convention held at the Dallas Convention Center on Friday and Saturday, June 11 and 12, party delegates elected Houston attorney Steve Munisteri as party chairman. Delegates also elected Melinda Fredericks of Conroe as vice chairwoman. Fredericks was appointed as commissioner of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission by Governor Rick Perry. The chairmanship and vice chairmanship positions are for two years with an eight-year term limit.



In assuming the party chairmanship by a vote of 4,294 votes to 2,950, Munisteri replaces Cathie Adams, often referred to in the press as a “firebrand.” Adams had served in the position for just one year, having been elected in 2009 to serve out the remainder of the term of Tina Benkiser, who left the post to work on Governor Perry’s campaign. Prior to becoming GOP chairwoman, Adams headed the Texas Eagle Forum. An AP report noted, “Munisteri had focused his campaign on the party’s \$500,000 debt, saying Republicans should be in better financial shape since they control both houses of the Legislature and all statewide offices.”

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A longtime Dallas-area conservative activist told this writer, however, that Adams had inherited her position from Perry supporters who had left the party in debt — and she got blamed for that inherited debt. But under her leadership the party paid off much of what was owed and managed to pay \$600,000 for this year’s convention in advance.

The *Dallas Morning News* for June 13 quoted Munisteri as telling delegates that he shared many of Adams’ socially conservative views, saying: “Our differences are insignificant to the duty we have to our country.”

Munisteri listed as the party’s first priority reelecting Rick Perry as Governor against challenger Bill White. He said that Republicans must then “take back the House and the Senate. And there’s no question we have to get rid of that man in the White House.”

A report in the *Daily Texan*, a newspaper published at the University of Texas at Austin, observed:



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By the time the convention was over, Cathie Adams, the current GOP chairwoman who had been endorsed by Perry in his acceptance speech, had been tossed out of office. Perry's input on the immigration planks of the platform had been ignored. A resolution to remove Texas Speaker of the House Joe Straus from his leadership position had generated voiced support before it was tabled, to raucous booing from delegates.

What began as a coronation for Perry as he runs for his third term as governor had turned into a free-for-all on the convention floor.

While the replacement of Adams by Munisteri was viewed by many as a defeat for conservatism and acquiescence to GOP "moderates" seeking to broaden the party's appeal among independent and minority voters, the dynamics that led to the change in party leadership were a bit more complicated than that. More than one observer of Texas politics told this writer that Adams had made political enemies — including supporters of Rep. Ron Paul and unsuccessful gubernatorial candidate Debra Medina, who lost to Perry and Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson in this year's GOP primary — and that some of these alienated people worked against her.

An article posted at the website of KERA, the Dallas-area's public broadcasting news station, was headlined: "[Medina Helps Defeat State GOP Chair: What's Next?](#)"

The KERA report noted that Medina's supporters had set up camp not at the convention, but at a nearby Dallas hotel. The article explained:

Medina says she moved her headquarters to Dallas' Magnolia Hotel after state republican party leaders rejected her application for a booth in the convention's exhibit hall. Medina previously sued the party claiming it violated its own convention rules. A spokesman says the lawsuit is why Medina's request for a booth was denied.

Medina supporters believe it's more about party officials trying to stay in control.

"In the past they were not quite so interested in people who have not come up through vetted approved channels," said T.J. Lane a republican delegate from McKinney.

"Debra Medina got nearly 20 percent, 275,000 votes and to say we won't even take your money to allow you to sit down and present the views of that large part of the electorate it's just ridiculous," Lane complained.

Medina has started a new organization called We Texans, using most of the \$150,000 left from her gubernatorial race. The KERA report cited Medina's claims the Texas Republican Party "has been controlled by an elite few who ignore grassroots activists like herself and those involved in the Tea Party."

When asked about the potential clout of her We Texans organization, Medina pointed to the vote by convention delegates to replace Cathie Adams.

Medina told KERA that she organized her supporters to help elect new party chair Steve Munisteri, believing he'll allow the activists a greater voice in shaping the Texas GOP.

If Medina and We Texans had difficulty in gaining a spot on the convention floor, The John Birch Society, the veteran, 51-year-old constitutionalist activist group fared much better. As a reporter for the *Dallas News* wrote: "The John Birch Society was selling a book [at its booth, pictured above], [Inside the Terror Triangle](#), in which Washington, Moscow and the Middle East have collaborated against hapless American families."



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Party political in-fighting aside, perhaps the most significant accomplishment at the convention was the adoption of a new party platform that came down hard on illegal immigration. These provisions read, in part:

We oppose illegal immigration, amnesty in any form leading to citizenship, or legal status for illegal immigrants. We support an end to the “catch and release” policy; criminal penalties and aggressive enforcement for those who knowingly employ illegal workers; expeditious hearings on deporting non-violent illegal immigrants; amending the U.S. constitution to suspend automatic U.S. citizenship to children born to illegal immigrants; elimination of federal and state funding to cities with “sanctuary” laws; empowering state and local law enforcement agencies with authority and resources to detain illegal immigrants....

Enforcement of Immigration Law - We support strict and immediate enforcement of all immigration laws.

Birthright Citizenship - We call on the Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches of these United States to clarify Section 1 of the 14th amendment to limit citizenship by birth to those born to a citizen of the United States: with no exceptions.

We observed one plank in the platform, however, that is probematic for those opposed to the interventionist foreign policy pursued by the United States in recent decades: “We believe our military forces deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, in particular, should not be prematurely withdrawn from the conflicts until victory has been secured and both countries are able to sustain peace with limited assistance from the United States.”

While Texans have done an outstanding job in creating an economic environment favorable to free enterprise and business, and have been in the forefront of defending state sovereignty, it is perhaps reassuring that this plank is merely an expression of sentiment, and has no weight constitutionally. Declaring war and raising and supporting armies, after all, is the responsibility neither of the President nor the Lone Star State, but of Congress.

Another plank in the platform, however, is worth its weight in gold (no pun intended). And that is:

Federal Reserve System — As long as it exists, We, The Republican Party, call upon the United States Congress to act immediately to pass a bill to require a full and complete audit of the Federal Reserve System and, that upon completion of the audit, the results be immediately provided to the United States Congress and to the People of the United States. We believe Congress should repeal the Federal Reserve Act of 1913.

We think Texas Representative Ron Paul, who introduced H.R.1207 — the Federal Reserve Transparency Act of 2009 — calling for a thorough audit of the Fed, and H.R.833 — the Federal Reserve Board Abolition Act — calling for abolishing the Fed, would heartily approve.

Read also: [“Texas GOP Convention Reveals Split Between Moderates and Conservatives”](#)



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