



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 14, 2010

Texas GOP Convention Reveals Split Between Moderates and Conservatives

Saturday's Texas GOP convention in Dallas proved to be derisive and decisive when 8,000 moderate and conservative Republicans debated the Republican Party platform and party leaders. Conservative Texas Republicans called for stricter conservative measures, including the passage of an immigration law similar to that of Arizona's.

GOP members also indicated their unwillingness to compromise on their conservative principles by attempting to pass a resolution that would remove the allegedly too moderate House Speaker Rep. Joe Straus of San Francisco.



Discussions on the GOP's illegal-immigration policy sparked fierce debate. In the end, Texas delegates voted in favor of adding a plank to the Republican Party platform that supports a state law to reiterate the criminality of illegal immigration. The proposed plank allows local police to enforce the law by verifying immigration status when making arrests, as it does in Arizona.

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In the past, Texas Governor Rick Perry has been quoted as saying that the approach taken by Arizona Governor Jan Brewer "isn't right for Texas." Despite opposition from Perry, Texas Republicans have grown weary of compromise and wish to forge ahead with a crackdown on illegal immigration in the state.

Several conservative delegates also requested a "nonbinding resolution calling on House Republicans to oust their own speaker, Rep. Joe Straus of San Francisco, considered too moderate for many of the bedrock conservatives meeting in Dallas this weekend," Fox News reports. The resolution asked that Republicans "remove and replace" Straus, who, with the help of House Democrats, took power in 2009.

According to the convention organizers, however, the resolution to remove Straus was deemed "out of order." Straus's spokeswoman Tracy Young indicated that Straus had "no comment" on the resolution.

Another plank in consideration amongst Texas GOP members called for an "open carry" law, which would remove the requirement for gun carriers to have a concealed weapons permit when carrying firearms in public.

Conservative leader Cathie Adams was voted out of her position and replaced by Houston businessman Steve Munisteri, who appealed to the GOP members by focusing his attention on the party's \$500,000 debt, indicative of the influence of Tea Party activists, who have demanded fiscal responsibility from Washington.

Aside from the clashes between Texas moderates and conservatives, the convention, held every two



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years, carried on in much the same way as it has in the past, comprised of prayer, video tributes, and fiery speeches from Republican leaders, including Texas Governor Perry.

Guest speaker Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour emphasized the importance of the 2010 elections, and indicated that the “stakes are higher than any midterm election in my lifetime.” Responding to the clear divisiveness within the GOP, Barbour asked the activists to “focus their ire not on each other but on the Democrats who had engineered the biggest lurch to the left in American history.”

Rather than ensuring that members of the GOP agree on every issue, Barbour urged that the Republican activists not let “purity” stand in the way of much-needed “unity.” He said, “We cannot forget unity because some people will let purity be the enemy of unity. It’s a big party and we need everybody who is on our side.”

Barbour’s language implies that a compromise can be struck between moderates and conservatives, but that philosophy proves to be dangerous if the compromise violates the strict parameters set by the Constitution. Unfortunately, it is those compromises that have ostracized strict constitutionalists from the Republican Party, as they could not support a political party that allows constitutional language to be distorted in order to support pre-emptive war and a movement towards global economy and governance.

Republicans at statewide GOP conventions would do well to study the Constitution more closely and relearn what the document was intended to do: limit government control.

Increasingly, this is what American voters are seeking in Washington, smaller government, and neither Republican nor Democratic politicians have satisfied that requirement. A recent CBS poll shows that 55 percent of American voters are dissatisfied with both parties. Likewise, by a margin of 2-1, voters now prefer a candidate that has no experience in Congress.

According to Herb Asher, professor of political science at Ohio State University, these voters are angry over the national debt and what they perceive to be government over-reaching.

It is the irresponsiveness of both parties that prompted the rise of the Tea Party movement in the first place. Chris Littleton, president of the Cincinnati Tea Party, explains, “Most people who identify with the tea party movement have come to the conclusion that both parties have been part of the problem,” and will likely vote Independent or third-party over Dems and Reps.

The demands from Tea Party activists have been for limited government, free market, and personal liberties, all which have been outlined in the Constitution.

Barbour advocates for “unity” over “purity,” but if the purity of the Constitution is compromised, nobody wins — certainly not the candidate who has compromised it, but most importantly, not the American people. That’s a lesson from which the GOP could learn.



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