



Written by [Gary Benoit](#) on November 5, 2008

What Happened to the Third-party Presidential Candidates?

In California, the nation's most populous state, former U.S. Ambassador (and former Republican presidential candidate) Alan Keyes got 0.3 percent of the vote. He did not do as well in the two remaining states where his name appeared on the ballot: Colorado and Florida.

Former Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul got 2.2 percent of the vote in Montana, despite the fact that he did not run for president in the general election and asked that his name be removed from the ballot. He also got 0.5 percent of the vote in Louisiana.



As in the past, most Americans limited their choice to one of the two major-party presidential candidates, as opposed to considering a third-party candidate whose views may have more closely matched theirs. Generally speaking, Americans vote for somebody they think can win. This lesson was clearly illustrated earlier this year when Ron Paul won his congressional district by a landslide in his Republican primary race for reelection to Congress yet lost both the district and the state in his Republican primary race for president.

Of course, by limiting their choices to the "viable" candidates, many Americans put themselves into the position of voting for "the lesser of two evils" based on the notion that they would be wasting their vote if they voted for a principled candidate who has no chance of winning. The counter argument, of course, is that you waste your vote when you vote for somebody you do not believe in. Constitution Party candidate Chuck Baldwin, who obviously is a strong adherent of the latter point of view, opined in an article he wrote prior to the election: "A wasted vote is a vote for someone you know does not represent your own beliefs and principles. A wasted vote is a vote for someone you know will not lead the country in the way it should go. A wasted vote is a vote for the 'lesser of two evils.' Or, in the case of John McCain and Barack Obama, what we have is a choice between the 'evil of two lessers.'"

* These results were based on 98 percent of precincts reporting.



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