



Campaign Trail

Clinton, Obama Each Win One

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By Allison Stevens
Washington Bureau Chief

Two female gubernatorial candidates in North Carolina and Indiana drew strength from the Clinton-Obama rivalry. One female voter registration drive--Women's Voices, Women's Vote--is fueling controversy at the top of the ticket.

WASHINGTON (WOMENSENEWS)--Presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton had a lackluster performance in Democratic primaries in North Carolina and Indiana Tuesday, but other aspiring political women in those states had a banner day.

At 11 p.m. Tuesday night, CNN reported that Clinton lost North Carolina to Illinois Sen. Barack Obama 56 to 42 percent; at the time she was leading Obama by only four points in Indiana.



Jill Long Thompson

Women fared better in state and local races.

In North Carolina, Democrat Beverly Perdue, the state's lieutenant governor, won her party's gubernatorial nomination, according to the Raleigh News & Observer. She will face Republican Pat McCrory in the general election this fall.

In Indiana, Democrat Jill Long Thompson, a former member of Congress, was locked in a dead heat against Democrat Jim Shellinger for her party's nod, according to the Indianapolis Star. The victor will face Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels in the fall.

If either Perdue or Thompson wins the general election this fall, she will make history as her state's first female governor.

If both win, they could also potentially boost the tally of U.S. female governors to a new record. The latest record was set in 2004, when nine women simultaneously occupied their states' governors' mansions, according to the center. [See sidebar.]

Perdue heads into the general election as the early favorite, according to Charlie Cook, an independent political analyst in Washington, D.C. Cook rates the Indiana race a toss-up.

Also in North Carolina, three women won congressional primaries and will go on to run for House seats in the general election this fall, and a number of women also won races for statewide office. In Indiana, two other women won their parties' nominations for statewide office.

In North Carolina, two women--Sen. Elizabeth Dole and state legislator Kay Hagan--won the right to run against each other in what will be a

historic woman v. woman matchup this fall in the race for the U.S. Senate.

In the primary for the North Carolina Senate seat, Dole handily beat back a challenge from retired police officer Pete DiLauro, and Hagan was projected to prevail in a crowded primary for the Democratic nomination.

Marquee Women's Race

The North Carolina Senate race will be the year's marquee woman v. woman race, said Gilda Morales, a researcher at the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey in New Brunswick.

Cook considers Dole a safe bet in November.

Female Governors Add Up

There are currently eight female governors, including Gov. Christine Gregoire, a Washington state Democrat who is up for re-election, and Delaware Gov. Ruth Ann Minner, who is retiring.

Wins by Perdue and Long Thompson would add one female governor to the net gain and restore the latest record, set in 2004, when nine women simultaneously occupied their states' governor's mansions, according to the Center for American Women and Politics.

A victory by a Republican woman for the seat being vacated by Gov. Matt Blunt in Missouri would add another female governor, prodding the record up to 10 women at the head of gubernatorial mansions next year. (Three Republican women--Jennie Lee Sievers, Christina Anderson and Sarah Steelman--have filed to run for Blunt's seat.)

Cook says that if Perdue prevails in North Carolina against Richard Moore, she heads into the general election as the early favorite. At this early stage, however, he considers the other gubernatorial races in Washington state, Missouri and Indiana toss-ups in the general election.

Morales conceded it would be difficult for Hagan--a state senator--to unseat an incumbent U.S. senator, but added: "If there's anyone who has a chance, it's Kay Hagan."

Races featuring two female candidates are a bonus for political women because they give female candidates experience and visibility and because they neutralize gender issues and focus attention on candidates' issues and records. At the same time, they can prevent women from making net gains in political representation.

There are currently 71 women in the House and 16 women in the Senate, according to the Center for American Women and Politics.



Beverly Purdue

In Tuesday's congressional primaries, Democrat Mary Ruley was projected to win her party's nomination for Indiana's 5th U.S. House district, according to the Indianapolis Star. It was too early to say at press time

whether a handful of other women would win their parties' nominations in other state and local races in North Carolina and Indiana.

No Clean Sweep for Women on Tuesday

In Indiana's 7th district, Democrats Frances Nelson Williams, a chaplain, and Carolene Mays, a state legislator, and Republican Catherine Ping, a technology consultant, lost their races for their party's nominations.

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Women and

The congressional districts where women ran Tuesday--many are large, rural districts with relatively few people of color--are not the kind that typically send women to Congress, said Barb Palmer, a professor of government at American University in Washington, D.C.

"Generally, women from both parties do better in districts that are smaller and more urban, and have higher incomes, higher levels of education, and more racial and ethnic diversity," Palmer said, noting that one-third of the women in Congress today come from New York and California.

The intensity of the Democratic presidential primary--and the presence of Clinton at the top of the ticket--helped female gubernatorial candidates, their spokespeople said in interviews before the election.

In North Carolina women made up 57 percent of the electorate, and in Indiana they were 55 percent, according to exit polls posted by CNN.

Perdue spokesperson David Kochman said he expected high female turnout would be "helpful" for his boss.

"Voters throughout the state are incredibly energized," he said. Perdue defeated Richard Moore, the state treasurer, in the party's gubernatorial primary.

In Indiana, Jeff Harris, spokesperson for Long Thompson, also predicted his boss would benefit from voter enthusiasm.

"The Obama voters--who are younger and are looking for change--that message ties really well with Jill's message," he said. "At the same time, Hillary Clinton is drawing a lot of women voters, and they are likely to support Jill's candidacy as well."

Women have turned out in record numbers this election cycle.

On Super Tuesday, Feb. 5, women heavily dominated the turnout in states that held nominating contests, accounting for between 55 percent and 62 percent of the electorate, according to an analysis by EMILY's List, the Washington-based political action committee that backs pro-choice female Democrats and is giving Clinton strong support.

The strong female turnout trend continued on March 4, when women represented between 55 and 62 percent of voters in Texas, Ohio and Rhode Island. In Pennsylvania's April 22 primary, nearly 60 percent of the electorate was female.

Registration-Drive Dispute

But the historic candidacies and record female turnouts have generated their own arenas for political controversy.

Women's Voices, Women Vote, a Washington-based group that works to involve unmarried women in elections, was strongly criticized last week by the North Carolina NAACP and other activist groups for a series of automatic phone calls to state voters.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People filed a complaint with the state Justice Department on Saturday, according to the Raleigh News & Observer, saying the calls--about a registration packet on its way in the mail even though the April 11 deadline for primary registration had already passed--were meant to suppress the black vote in a deliberate attempt to confuse voters.

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In a statement posted on its Web site, Women's Voices, Women Vote denied the charges, saying the North Carolina effort was part of a national voter registration campaign aimed at the general election in November. So far, it has registered 400,000 unmarried women across the nation and sent registration packets to 10 million people in 26 states, the group said.

Over the weekend the nonpartisan Women's Voices, Women Vote drew some negative media attention for maintaining close ties to the Clinton campaign. The Washington Post reported that Page Gardner, its president, has donated \$6,700 to the campaign; John Podesta, former chief of staff for President Bill Clinton, is a board member; and Maggie Williams, Hillary Clinton's campaign manager, has been a consultant to the group.

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