

Primary Day: Will Tea Party Win DE and NH?

Michael Sean Winters | Sep. 14, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

Today is a great day first of all because I get to vote today in the Maryland primary. There are several local races that are being hotly contested. Voting is the most basic act of citizenship and I love going in and marking my ballot.

The two races of national importance are in Delaware and New Hampshire. Both primary contests will help decide if the GOP has a real shot at taking over the U.S. Senate and, as well, whether "GOP moderates" will become protected under the Endangered Species Act.

In Delaware, Christine O'Donnell is challenging Rep. Mike Castle for the GOP Senate nod. Castle is very likely to win in November and O'Donnell is very likely to lose, but the concern for pragmatism is scoffed at by the Tea Party crowd which is backing O'Donnell. They intend to take over the Republican Party and make it their vehicle to change the country. They have had some success in Alaska, Utah, and Colorado, but they failed to unseat more establishment picks in Arizona and California. I am hoping that Castle wins, not because I want the GOP to take control of the Senate but because I do not think it is healthy for the Republican Party to become so beholden to the Tea Party crowd that our politics becomes more ideological.

In New Hampshire, there is a Tea Party split, with Sarah Palin backing Attorney General Kelly Ayotte and the happily named Ovid Lamontagne winning the support of Sen. Jim DeMint and of the influential Manchester Union Leader newspaper. I watched some of the GOP Senate debate on television the other night, and none of the candidates could inspire a mouse to cheese, but I thought Ayotte was especially stiff and superficial in her replies and Lamontagne was a little too passionate for his own good. Yankees don't like too much emotion.

The other great thing about a day like today is that it shows how a small group of people in two small states can have an enormous impact on the direction of the nation. Primaries attract very few voters, and in a small state like Delaware or New Hampshire, those few voters nonetheless have the power to change the character of one of the two major parties and also to decide whether or not the Senate is in play in November. Whatever else you do, make sure you vote. I will.

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