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Santorum quits race, Romney takes the lead

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By Yashmin Patel / University Editor | 0 comments

Republican presidential hopeful Rick Santorum decided to suspend his campaign for the Republican nomination yesterday and dropped out of the 2012 presidential race.

Ruth Mandel, director of Eagleton Institute of Politics, said the former Pennsylvania senator could have stopped his campaign because the numbers did not add up in his favor to win the Republican nomination.

"If he had stayed in and not won his home state of Pennsylvania, he would have been in a much a weaker position for the future," she said. "There would have been fewer options in the future."

Santorum strongly appealed to one section of the Republican Party, mostly composed of the party's evangelical right, Mandel said.

"He doesn't speak to the rest of the Republican Party and doesn't speak to independents," she said.

Mandel said he would not have been able to pick up populous states like California, New Jersey and New York, but had a better chance of picking up some southern states.

She said Santorum tried to find a way to pick up votes from Texas, but winning the state was impossible for him.

"He probably was not successful in negotiating with Gov. [Rick] Perry or the Texas Republicans about coming out with the delegates he needed even if he did well in Texas," she said.

She said Santorum's inability to gain enough delegates to get ahead of former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney was becoming clearer.

Although former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich is still in the race, Mandel said the field is clear for Romney to be the likely nominee at the Republican National Convention.

Romney's campaign will shift its resources to the states that he believes are needed to get the nomination, she said.

"[Romney] will focus more and more on the president as his opponent and not on a primary opponent," Mandel said.

The race between President Barack Obama and Romney will be competitive because the president is vulnerable



on some issues, she said.

In the national polls, the president is ahead in terms of likeability but is not ahead of him in areas such as jobs and economy, she said.

"It'll be a hard fought race on both sides," she said. "We have seven months to go, that's a long campaign."

Some states will be fought over for both Romney and Obama, Mandel said, including Ohio, Virginia and Florida.

"It means that there's a competitive opportunities, and the White House will not take the race for granted," she said. "Both will fight for independents which is a large group of voters."

Connor Montferrat, president of the Rutgers College Republicans, said even though Santorum was gaining in the polls, he did not think the candidate was going to be the nominee of the Republican Party.

"[With] his loss in his home state in re-election with about 18 or 19 points, [he] is not an electable person because of his stance on his issues — he's your true conservative," said Montferrat, a School of Arts and Sciences senior.

Romney is more moderate, so he will make for a closer race with Obama, he said.

"I'm behind any nominee of the Republican Party to defeat President Obama," Montferrat said,

Daniel Pereira, vice president of the Rutgers University Democrats, said he was not surprised that Santorum suspended his campaign for the Republican nomination.

Because the numbers were heavily in Romney's favor, Pereira, a School of Arts and Sciences senior, said it was not possible for Santorum to make a comeback.

"I think [Obama is] going to win. They're going to see a true contrast between people and ideologies," he said. "Romney is more into money, and Obama worked his way up through a working class. ... [He is] supporting students [and] the middle class — Gov. Romney is supporting his friends."

Pereira said he thinks polls tighten as Election Day approaches, but believes Santorum would probably have lost the primary in his home state of Pennsylvania.

"I really don't think there was any way for him to win. ... I wish he could have stayed in longer because it'd be better for the president to have to have the Republican nomination drawn out more," Pereira said.

Stephen Mennitt, a School of Arts and Sciences senior, said although Santorum was able to gain support from some southern states, most of the country does not agree with his radical ideas.

"I don't think it really matters too much at this point because he was sort of out of the race anyways," Mennitt said.

Matthew Knoblauch, a School of Arts and Sciences senior, said, as Democrat, he would vote for Obama no matter who the Republican nominee is, but prefers having Romney as the nominee over Santorum.

"Santorum in my opinion would be a terrible leader of America," he said.

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