

Republican primaries take East Coast

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Republican primaries take East Coast By Lisa Berkman / Correspondent DailyTargum.com | 1 comment

The primaries are coming to the East Coast today as residents from New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Delaware vote to determine the Republican Party's presidential nomination.

Ruth Mandel, director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics, said the nomination would probably be handed over to Mitt Romney, whose popularity is high among voters.

"He's been planning this campaign since the last election, so he's prepared," Mandel said. "He has the organization, he has the staff and he has the money."

Connor Montferrat, president of Rutgers College Republicans, said Romney is even more likely to win the 95 delegates in New York at the Republican National Convention after receiving former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani's endorsement.

In fact, he might just have all five states safe in his pocket, as Romney is leading in polls and will probably win all 231 delegates, Montferrat said.

"I'm excited for [today]," said Montferrat, a School of Arts and Sciences junior. "I can't wait for the presidential candidate to be officially announced as Mitt Romney."

Daniel Pereira, vice president of the Rutgers University Democrats, said though Pennsylvania is Santorum's home state, he is not likely to win since he suspended his campaign.

"Since he's stopped campaigning, I don't think he'll get the votes," said Pereria, a School of Arts and Sciences senior. "They want a more moderate form of a Republican, and that potentially helps Mitt Romney."

Pereira said the scales are generously tipping in Romney's favor, with other candidates having a small chance of winning.

"[Competing candidates] would have to win about 70 percent in every state remaining to catch up to Mitt Romney," Pereira said. "At this point, it's a mathematical problem for [Newt] Gingrich and Ron Paul. The numbers don't work out for them."

Mandel said though Paul and Gingrich are still in the race, they are not expected to get enough votes to win a nomination.

"The numbers are not there for them," she said. "Even if they decide to go all the way to the convention without dropping out, they don't have the delegate votes."

Mandel said Romney has made it to the top by appealing to the financial worries of voters.

"He's running as a business person," Mandel said. "He says that improving the economy and creating jobs is his strength, and that the president has not done well in those areas."

Montferrat said he believes Romney's financial experience makes him a serious competitor for President Barack Obama in November.

"If there's a downturn in the economy, Romney will win," he said. "If there isn't a downturn — if instead there's an upturn — Obama will win, but only by a few votes. It's going to be close."

But Pereira said Romney might not be so successful because of Obama's effective stimulus policies.

"The president has a record of success. The economy is doing better, industry is back, [and] job loss is down," he said. "Either we're on a track that's finally growing the economy, or we go back to the same policies that led us to essentially a depression."

Montferrat said the most important priority is to find a candidate that can challenge Obama.

"We need some leadership, and Romney will definitely be taking it home," Montferrat said. "I'm behind any candidate to defeat the president."

Mandel believes a race between Obama and Romney would become extremely expensive and heated.

"There's a big gap between Obama and Romney, with Obama having a large lead in the public opinion polls," she said. "However, if the economy doesn't improve, the president is vulnerable because Romney runs on that issue."

Mandel said there would be a significant decline in voter turnout because of the public assumption that Romney will win the candidacy.

"Voter turnout has been low throughout the primary season," she said. "It's probably going to be lower now that there's less of a contest."

Montferrat said the low political morale in America is responsible for the small turnout rate.

"The United States is known for low voter turnout," he said. "It's because of the political efficacy of the government. People feel like they alone can't change the government."

Mandel said the outcome is ultimately up to the independent voters and swing states, whose numbers have been on the rise.

"It is not clear which direction they'll go," Mandel said. "In the end, they will have a decisive impact on the election."