

Alabama leads conservative Deep South

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[By Steve Flowers](#)

Alabama and the Deep South have now become the heart and soul of the Republican Party in America. We are the most reliable base of support for any GOP presidential candidate. We and our sister southern states of Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, South Carolina and Louisiana are the bastion of the GOP.

Our loyalty to Republican presidential candidates is not only unquestionable and predictable, it has been going on for quite a while. Alabama has been a safe haven for the GOP for close to five decades when it comes to national politics. Since 1964, we have voted for the GOP candidate for president 11 out of 13 times. The Republican candidate has carried Alabama the last nine presidential elections going back 36 years to 1976.

The Republican Party will continue to dominate Alabama politics for the foreseeable future. Why? Because it is the conservative party. We in Alabama and the South are the most conservative region of the country. We are indeed rock ribbed conservative through any prism whether you are talking about social or moral issues, Christian or pro-life issues, strong military issues, gun rights or fiscal conservatism. You name it. When it comes to the word conservative, we wrote the book and we define the word.

However, I am afraid we are not in the mainstream of current political opinion. America has left us and moved to the left. That is obvious with the two elections of Barack Obama, the most left leaning president in history. In fact, Obama more clearly epitomizes and espouses the philosophy of a European Socialist Democrat. Therefore, he has driven us even further into the Republican corner.

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However, in contrast, where we in Alabama have become a more hardcore and dedicated Republican state, the rest of the nation has moved away from the GOP. The Republican Party is in trouble on the national level. A recent NBC-Wall Street poll found that 50% of American voters have a negative view of the Party. They are perceived as intolerant, elitist and out of touch. Indeed, in last year's election, Romney received only 7% of the black vote but more importantly, he captured only 27% of the Hispanic vote.

The Party is also sharply divided into two distinct philosophical camps. The divide is not only an ideological war but a cultural war. It is between the Romney elitists and the Tea Party Republicans. The Tea Partyists never really embraced the mega rich Romney. They could not warm up to his patrician elitist demeanor or forget his centrist history.

It is the grassroots Tea Party right wing faction that has driven the average American voter away from the GOP's candidates. It is perceived that the Tea Party runs the GOP and that they are extreme. This has clearly pushed the middle-class American swing voter, who controls elections, away in droves, especially women.

Who can lead the Republican Party out of the wilderness? The candidates are already lining up for 2016. The three leading candidates coming out of the chute are Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindall, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, and Florida Senator Marco Rubio.

Jindall does not appear to be presidential timber to me. He seems weak and inarticulate. He also hails from a state that brings nothing to the table. Louisiana is going to vote Republican regardless. One of my mentors in politics was an old crusty Probate Judge. One day when I was a boy, I sauntered down to the courthouse to ask his opinion about a candidate who was getting ready to run for governor. The old judge used the phrase, "he ain't gonna go anywhere. He ain't heavy enough." Jindall ain't quite heavy enough.

The second contender on the GOP radar, Chris Christie is too heavy. The last president to look like him was William Howard Taft and that was before television. It would also be next to impossible for a liberal northeasterner from New Jersey, who stabbed Romney in the back in 2012, to capture a GOP nomination from a party led by western and southern conservatives.

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That leaves Florida Senator Marco Rubio. He is the real thing. He is young, charismatic, handsome, articulate and a true blue conservative. He comes across as sincere, genuine and believable. He is Hispanic. He is from the most populous and important swing state in America. Rubio still lives in the same working class neighborhood where he grew up in Miami. He says to Obama, my neighbors aren't millionaires but retirees, workers and immigrants. He further says, Mr. Obama, I don't oppose your plans because I want to protect the rich, I oppose your plans because I want to protect my neighbors.

Time magazine recently featured Rubio on their cover with the title, "The Republican Savior." Rubio may be just that.