Trump, Sanders win primary contests in Indiana

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Billionaire Donald Trump and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders won the Republican and Democratic primaries in Indiana Tuesday.

The Trump victory was particularly significant, since it effectively clinches the Republican nomination for a fascistic candidate who has campaigned on a program of racist attacks on immigrants and Muslims, extreme nationalism and militarism, including supporting torture and mass killing of civilians.

Trump won 53 percent of the Republican primary vote compared to 37 percent for Texas Senator Ted Cruz, another extreme right-wing militarist, and 8 percent for Ohio Governor John Kasich. The Manhattan real estate mogul was expected to win at least 51 of the 57 delegates at stake in the primary.

Cruz, now trailing Trump by nearly 500 delegates, announced he was suspending his campaign, effectively conceding the nomination, although he did not mention either Trump or the Republican Party in his remarks.

His withdrawal statement was an extreme right-wing diatribe, as Cruz declared China, Russia, North Korea and Iran to be mortal threats to the United States, and denounced the Democratic Party for its supposed "path of creeping socialism that incentivizes apathy."

Kasich remains in the race, but has won no primaries outside of his home state and only a handful of delegates.

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Preibus declared on Twitter that Trump should be considered the presumptive Republican nominee and that the party should now unite behind his candidacy. The trickle of Republican Party officials and officeholders backing Trump is now expected to become a flood.

In the Democratic primary, Sanders won 53 percent of the vote compared to 47 percent for Clinton. The result does little to cut into Clinton's lead of more than 300 among elected delegates, since proportional representation gave Sanders only a 43-40 edge among delegates chosen in Indiana.

Clinton leads among unelected superdelegates—mainly party officials and office-holders—by 520 to 39, bringing her total support to more than 2,200 delegates after Indiana, compared to 1,400 for Sanders. A total of 2,382 are required for nomination.

Voter turnout was little more than half as large as in the last contested Democratic primary in Indiana, in 2008, which was won narrowly by Hillary Clinton over Barack Obama. Some 1.2 million voted in that primary, while less than 700,000 voted this year.

Exit polls showed the results in Indiana closely resembling those in neighboring Michigan, which Sanders won March 8, to the shock of both the Clinton campaign and media pundits and pollsters, who had predicted a Clinton victory. There was little polling in Indiana but Clinton had been favored in media predictions.

Sanders won voters in the 18-29 age bracket by 74-26 percent, as well as voters aged 30 to 44, by 64-36 percent. He won nonwhite voters under 45 by the same margin, 53-47, as his statewide victory.

People under 45 comprised 47 percent of those voting in the Democratic primary, the highest proportion for any state this year (Michigan had been the highest, with 45 percent). Sanders also won union voters by 54 to 46 percent, slightly better than his statewide margin.

The key factor in the outcome was that Indiana is an open primary, with independents allowed to choose a Democratic Party ballot and vote. Clinton actually won registered Democrats by a margin of 53 to 47 percent, but Sanders carried independents by 72 to 28 percent,

giving him the overall victory.

Sanders addressed a campaign rally in Louisville, Kentucky before the final result in Indiana was known, then spoke to the media afterwards about his victory there. He indicated that his campaign would continue through contests in West Virginia, Kentucky and Oregon, in all of which he is favored, right up to the final big primary day June 7, with contests in California, New Jersey and several smaller states.

"I'll tell you what is extremely exciting for me, and that is that in primary after primary, caucus after caucus, we end up winning the vote of people 45 years of age and younger," Sanders said. "And that is important because it tells me that ideas that we are fighting for are the ideas for the future of America and the future of the Democratic Party."

This comment underscores the central function of the Sanders campaign. While he has won the support of large numbers of young people and workers with his claims to be a "democratic socialist" and to oppose the domination of American society by "millionaires and billionaires," Sanders is committed to supporting the Democratic Party and its near-certain nominee Hillary Clinton, a lackey of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus.

The result of the Indiana primary does little to alter the likely contours of the November election, in which the two corporate-controlled parties will present to the American people the two most unpopular candidates in recent US history. Polls have shown 65 percent have an unfavorable opinion of Trump, with more than 50 percent actively fearing a Trump presidency, while some 56 percent have an unfavorable opinion of Clinton.

Trump has vilified immigrants, minorities and women, and personifies the arrogance and ignorance of the US financial oligarchy. Clinton has a record of four decades of political service to that oligarchy, and is implicated in all the crimes of Obama's first term, when she was Secretary of State, including wars in Libya, Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Afghanistan.

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