



Office of Senate President Pro Tempore Del Marsh  
Press Clips  
Tuesday, July 08, 2014

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## **Hubbard, Marsh win GOP primaries (AP)**

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) - The Republican leaders of the Alabama Legislature beat back challengers Tuesday to win their primaries.

Speaker of the House Mike Hubbard of Auburn fought off a primary challenge by Auburn businessman Sandy Toomer.

With 88 percent of precincts reporting, Hubbard had 60 percent of the vote to Toomer's 40 percent, according to unofficial returns.

Hubbard faces Democrat Shirley Scott Harris in November.

Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh of Anniston defeated a tea party challenger to win the Republican nomination for Senate District 12.

With 94 percent of precincts reporting, Marsh had 60 percent of the vote to Steve Guede's 40 percent, according to unofficial returns.

Marsh faces Democrat Taylor Stewart in November.

## **Marsh beats Tea Party primary challenger (Anniston Star)**

Sen. Del Marsh, R-Anniston, defeated tea party challenger Steven Guede on Tuesday to win the GOP nomination for another term representing District 12 in the Alabama Senate.

With 94 percent of precincts reporting, Marsh late Tuesday night held 60 percent of the vote to Guede's 40 percent.

"Now it's our job to bring the party back together into this general election," Marsh said. "I'll start working on that tomorrow."

Marsh, as the Senate president pro tempore, has been one of the most powerful men in Alabama politics over the last four years, but he ran into opposition from the Alabama Education Association and from dissenters within his own party.

Elected as pro tem after Republicans won both houses of the Legislature in 2010, Marsh played a key role in the changes to election law, immigration policy and government restructuring that followed the GOP takeover. He was the chief architect of the Alabama Accountability Act, a 2013 law that offered tax credits to parents who withdraw their children from "failing" public schools and place them in private schools.

The bill was fiercely opposed by the AEA, the state's largest professional organization for teachers, who argued that the \$40 million set aside for the tax credits was money taken from public schools to give to private schools.

Marsh also picked up opposition from some grassroots activists within his own party when he chose not to bring to the Senate floor a bill that would have banned the state from using Common Core standards in K-12 public schools. Conservative activists have opposed the Common Core, a multi-state set of academic standards, on the grounds that it is an overreach of federal power. Marsh said the issue was a matter for the state's school board to decide.

Guede, a Saks resident and activist for the Rainy Day Patriots tea party group, cited Common Core as one of his main reasons for running against Marsh. Guede also opposed Marsh's efforts to complete an article-by-article rewrite of the Alabama Constitution and criticized Marsh for limited job growth in Calhoun County, the core of his district.

Guede and the AEA joined forces in opposition to Marsh, with the teachers' group buying more than \$100,000 of campaign advertising on the challenger's behalf.

Marsh faces Democrat Taylor Stewart in November. Attempts to reach Stewart on Tuesday were unsuccessful.

Guede said he'll continue to be involved in politics, as a member of the county's Republican Executive Committee and a member of the Legislative Watchdogs, a tea party group.

"I'll continue to be a voice for all the people, not just some of the people," he said

And he said he'll continue to fight against Common Core.

"But first," he said. "I'll get some sleep."

## **Alabama's Republican primary was an unmitigated disaster for the AEA (Yellowhammer News)**

The months leading up to last night's Alabama Republican primary elections were engulfed by a tsunami of negative advertising. The ads, which were delivered to voters via television, direct mail, radio, the Internet and over the phone, were designed to drown Republican incumbents with wave

after wave of attacks. Many of them were paid for directly by the Alabama Education Association (AEA), others were funded by a couple of groups widely believed to be fronts for the AEA created to hide their involvement from voters.

In all, the AEA spent roughly \$7 million this primary season. \$7 million worth of teachers' dues was spent with the sole purpose of eroding the current Republican supermajority.

So what did \$7 million buy them?

Zero statewide races. Zero state senate races. And only a handful of state house races.

AEA successfully took down incumbent Republican House members Richard Baughn (HD14), Wayne Johnson (HD22), Charles Newton (HD90), Bill Roberts (HD13) and Kurt Wallace (HD42).

But those AEA wins were in many ways offset by defeats in races they thought they had in the bag going into election day, but ultimately couldn't push over the finish line.

For instance, AEA consultants were confident that incumbent Sen. Tom Whatley (R-Auburn) was going down, but he ended up winning comfortably by 6 points.

They also thought they were in good shape in east Alabama where long-time Democrat-turned-Republican senator Gerald Dial was struggling to beat back challenger Tim Sprayberry. The race was so close that many outlets, including Yellowhammer, believed at one point during the night that Dial had lost. But when all the votes were counted he had won by about 400 votes.

Up in north Alabama, AEA believed they had a sure-fire victory with Republican state representative Todd Greeson, an AEA ally, stepping up to run for the open senate seat in District 8. They pumped hundreds of thousands of dollars into Greeson's campaign, only to see him fall to conservative businessman Steve Livingston by 12 points.

In the Wiregrass, the AEA was 0 for 2. They sent hundreds of thousands of dollars down to challenger Garreth Moore, only to watch him lose by 16 points to incumbent senator Jimmy Holley. And they spent a half-million dollars to drag state representative Barry Moore through the mud, but didn't even come close to beating him at the ballot box.

In statewide races, they supported Stan Cooke's ill-fated challenge of Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey, and Jim Perdue's third-place finish in the race for secretary of state.

The list could go on and on.

But the highest profile races of the primary were the AEA's challenges to Republican House and Senate leaders Mike Hubbard and Del Marsh. They spent an unprecedented amount of money to take down the GOP's top two legislators, but lost both races by 20 points. In Hubbard's race, the AEA spent somewhere in the neighborhood of a whopping \$500 per vote.

So, again, what did \$7 million in teachers' hard-earned money buy the AEA's political operation?

Not much.

## **Holley wins district (Troy Messenger)**

Incumbent wins primary easily

Incumbent Jimmy Holley won almost 60 percent of the 19,419 votes cast in the District 31 Senate primary Tuesday, defeating challenger Garreth Moore.

Holley led in each of the four counties in his district. He took 60 percent of the votes cast here in Pike County.

"These were big numbers," Holley said when contacted Tuesday night. "We couldn't ask for any better."

The story was similar across the district, with Holley winning 58 percent of all the votes cast.

Holley said he felt good going into the election, and that polling numbers held true.

"We had polls from six months ago, and they really did not change," he said. "As recently as two weeks ago, this is what the polls predicted, so we kept doing what we were doing."

Moore, who received \$350,000 in funding from AEA, hit Holley hard on the years he's spent in Montgomery. Holley was first elected to the Alabama House in 1974, where he served five terms, and has served four terms in the Alabama Senate.

But voters chose experience on Tuesday.

"I appreciate the support, and look forward to going back to Montgomery," he said.

Holley said he will spend tomorrow picking up signs and cleaning up from the campaign.

Holley also won soundly in Covington County, where he picked up 63 percent of the votes, or 4,397 to Moore's 3,421.

The race was closer in Coffee County, where both candidates live. Holley got 55 percent of the vote with 4,192 votes to Moore's 3,421.

The district also includes a portion of Dale County, where Holley got 52 percent of the votes cast, or 1,270 to Moore's 1,177.

The total of the four counties was 11,264 for Holley, 8,155 for Moore.

The winner still faces Democrat opposition in November from Larry Greenwood.

## **Dial wins Senate District 13 GOP primary (Anniston Star)**

The Republican candidates for Alabama Senate District 13 knew it would be a close race, they just didn't know it would go down to the wire Tuesday night.

But when it did, legislative veteran Gerald Dial emerged with the winning numbers, overcoming a challenge from Tim Sprayberry by just 416 votes out of more than 14,000 cast.

Prior to the announcement of results, Dial said he was prepared for a tight race, but was still surprised by how close the numbers were.

"I knew it was going to be close, but I didn't think it would be this close," Dial said.

Dial has represented residents in rural east Alabama off and on since the 1980s, first as a member of the House, and then for six terms in the Senate. In 2006, Dial, then a Democrat, lost the District 13 seat, which covers parts of Cleburne, Clay, Randolph, Cherokee, Chambers and Lee counties. He made a switch to the Republican party in 2009 and won the seat back in 2010. Dial said his experience and seniority helped him stand up against politicians from more urban districts in making sure the voice of rural Alabama is heard in Montgomery.

Dial, 76, told The Star last year that 2014 would be his last election.

Dial's party switch made him a target of his opponent, Sprayberry, who started campaigning against the incumbent last summer, telling The Star that Dial was not a true Republican and was a "Carter Democrat" and "Obama Democrat." Sprayberry, a private investigator from Heflin and chairman of the Cleburne County Republican Party, said if elected he'd work on protecting gun owners' rights and limiting involvement from the federal government.

Senate District 13 was one of five in the state targeted last year by the now-defunct Alabama Democratic Majority, chaired by Mark Kennedy. Kennedy told The Star last year that Dial was one of the sitting Republicans he believed could lose a spot to a Democrat in 2014.

Attempts late Tuesday to reach Democratic candidate Darrell Turner were unsuccessful.

## **SENATE DISTRICT 27: Whatley edges Carter (Opelika-Auburn News)**

Incumbent Sen. Tom Whatley defeated challenger Andy Carter in Tuesday's primary election, securing his place as the Republican nominee for Alabama Senate District 27 in November's general election. Whatley received 7,922 votes to Carter's 6,891, 53 percent of the total votes.

Monday and Tuesday, Whatley's supporters waved red signs on street corners across Lee County.

"We did a lot of sign waving," Whatley said, crediting a group of young volunteers. "We did a lot of calling and texting."

Whatley said his campaign was a grassroots venture, both financially and on the ground.

The senator spent Tuesday night at his family farm in Beauregard, where he thanked all of his volunteers. Family and friends, some from his days at Auburn University, joined him.

"It's just great here at the farm," Whatley said. "We're just having a good time here."

Whatley, an area businessman and Lee County native who was raised on a dairy farm, spent his first term focused on job creation and retention. He said his four years in office saw the creation of 2,600 local jobs. During that time, GE Aviation, Rausch & Pausch and Pharmavite moved into Lee County.

"We will continue to attract more jobs," he said. "Grow jobs and grow the economy."

To attract industry, Whatley plans to lower the cost of energy and improve public education, along with showcasing the area's research institutions.

Whatley also focused on reducing government spending. To date, the senator said he has seen more than \$1 billion of state spending cut. His goal is to continue to see the decline of government spending to help his constituents get "the most bang for your buck."

He will also continue to oppose the Affordable Care Act.

As a state senator, Whatley has enjoyed serving his constituents.

"The best thing I get out of serving is when a constituent calls up and has had a problem with some government agency or some problem that they have, and we are able to help that constituent get around the frustration that they have and solve their issue," he said.

If elected in the Nov. 4 general election, Whatley will spend another four years serving Lee, Russell and Tallapoosa counties in Montgomery.

Carter called to congratulate Whatley around 10:30 p.m.

"It was a hard-fought race, a well-fought race," Carter said. "I look forward to supporting the Republican Party in the fall."

## **Kay Ivey wins GOP nod for lieutenant governor (AP)**

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Republican Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey is half-way toward her goal of winning a second term.Kay

Ivey won the Republican nomination Tuesday night by defeating Kimberly minister Stan Cooke. With 66 percent of precincts reporting, Ivey has 61 percent of the vote to Cooke's 39 percent, according to unofficial returns.

Ivey meets the Democratic nominee, former state Rep. James Fields, in the general election Nov. 4.

## **Chambliss leads in state Senate 30 race (Montgomery Advertiser)**

Clyde Chambliss Jr. led in the state Senate District 30 Republican primary, but it was unclear at press deadline if he would avoid a runoff.

With 99 percent of the votes counted, the Associated Press had Chambliss at 9,115 or 50 percent, and Harris Garner of Millbrook with 5,824 votes, or about 32 percent. Rounding out the crowded field was Suzelle Josey at 2,092 or about 11 percent and Bill Harris at 1,221 or about 7 percent.

Garner wasn't ready to concede at about 10:30 p.m. Tuesday.

"We've still got some Millbrook boxes that haven't reported," he said. "We expect to do well in those boxes, and we expect to knock his numbers down to below 50 percent. That's what we're working towards, to do this all over again in six weeks."

If a runoff is necessary, it will take place July 15.

Chambliss said his numbers showed him at 51 percent, but he wasn't calling it a victory outright.

"It's very close and there are provisional ballots out there," he said. "They could change the percentages. Other than that we are very grateful with the support we have received. If a runoff is needed we plan on working very hard to take that race as well."



Provisional ballots will be counted next week.

The seat became open when freshman incumbent Bryan Taylor decided not to seek re-election. The candidates are Chambliss, an engineer from Prattville; Garner, an electrical contractor from Millbrook; Harris, and insurance agent from the Autauga County community of Deatsville; and Josey, an insurance agent from the Autauga County community of Pine Level.

The district includes all of Autauga and Coosa counties and portions of Elmore, Chilton and Tallapoosa counties.

There are no qualified Democratic or Independent candidates in the November General election in the District 30 race.

## **[Senate District 8: Clemmons wins Democratic primary, Livingston wins GOP primary \(al.com\)](#)**

Horace Clemmons and Steve Livingston emerged with convincing victories Tuesday in the Senate District 8 primary races.

Clemmons defeated Randy Bruce Money in the Democratic primary, garnering 57 percent of the vote with 86 of 88 precincts reporting. Livingston defeated state Rep. Todd Greeson with 56 percent of the vote with 86 of 88 precincts reporting.

Clemmons and Livingston will face off in the Nov. 4 general election to fill the seat currently held by Sen. Shadrack McGill, who did not seek re-election.

District 8 includes Jackson County and parts of Madison and DeKalb counties.

"I have to now start getting ready for November," Clemmons said. "I believe if we can make the issues about the problems that we have in the district, I will be the clear choice in November. I believe that my background and my experience makes me the most qualified person to solve the problems that we have here."

Clemmons is attempting to regain a seat that was held for decades by Democrats. Longtime Democratic state Sen. Lowell Barron rose to become one of the state's most powerful lawmakers before his upset defeat to McGill in the 2010 Republican sweep to power in Montgomery.

Meanwhile, Livingston won one of the state's more hotly contested Senate races in the primary election.

Greeson, who was first elected to the legislature in 1998, pulled in endorsements from Gov. Robert Bentley and the NRA while Livingston garnered endorsements from U.S. Rep. Mo Brooks and received campaign contributions from political action committees chaired by former Gov. Bob Riley and House Speaker Mike Hubbard, R-Auburn.

Greeson also received \$200,000 in campaign contributions from AEA, which he credited to his long track record of being a staunch supporter of education. Greeson is the administrative coordinator for business and industry at Northeast Alabama Community College in Rainsville.

Livingston received the endorsement of the Business Council of Alabama, which he credited to his strong business background.

Clemmons, a retired technology businessman, served one term on the Jackson County Commission before seeking the state Senate seat.

## **[Shay Shelnett and Brett King move on to runoff election in Republican primary for Alabama Senate District 17 seat \(al.com\)](#)**

The seven candidates vying to fill Scott Beason's vacant state Senate District 17 seat are now down to two. Shay Shelnett and Brett King received the most votes in today's Republican primary election and will face each other in a runoff election July 15.

Shelnett received 34.6 percent of the votes, and King received 30.3 percent of votes. The unofficial numbers, which don't include provisional ballots, are the results from 49 of 51 precincts, or 96 percent of the vote.

"I just want to thank everyone who worked on my campaign," Shelnett told AL.com. "We're excited and I can't believe all the support we've had."

King said he was "humbled and honored" to have support from a lot of the district. "We believe our message is resonating with the people and that they believe I can do the job," King said.

No Democrats filed for Senate District 17.

The other candidates in the race and their vote percentages from today's primary are:

Jim Murphree - 9.5 percent

Gayle Gear - 8.0 percent

Jim Roberts - 7.6 percent

Joe Cochran - 6.6 percent

Adam Ritch - 3.4 percent

## **[Seibert, Melson in GOP run-off, Curtis wins Democratic bid for Alabama Senate District 1 \(al.com\)](#)**

As candidates and their campaign assistants scrambled to keep up with vote tallies from three counties in the newly created Senate District 1, Mike Curtis was declared the Democratic winner, while Republicans Chris Seibert and Tim Melson learned they will face a runoff.

Republicans

Candidate Chris Seibert, who currently serves as an Athens City Councilman, is head coach for his son's playoff game in the 5- and 6-year-old baseball league and made the decision to coach the game rather than watch election returns at Limestone County Event Center. He said the game went into overtime and his son Ben's team eventually lost 24-23.

"It's been quite a night," he said by phone from the baseball field.

"I haven't seen the poll results but I hear we're in a runoff," he said. "We're ready and invigorated. I think our campaign picked up at the end so I'm really motivated. We started getting into Florence in the last few weeks and it really showed. I couldn't be in a better position."

Seibert will face Tim Melson, a physician from Florence, in a runoff July 15 to see who will face Democrat Mike Curtis in the Nov. 4 general election. Melson was unavailable for comment immediately following election results.

See a Q&A with Melson and Seibert [here](#).

Unofficial tallies are (the box with provisional ballots in each county will not be counted for several days):

Limestone (with 17 of 18 precincts reporting):

Johnathan Berryhill: 1,506 or 24 percent

Tim Melson: 1,144 or 18 percent

Chris Seibert: 3,573 or 57 percent

Lauderdale (with 18 of 20 precincts):

Berryhill: 2,323 or 23 percent

Melson: 3,687 36 percent

Seibert: 4,042 or 40 percent

Madison (9 of 11 precincts reporting):

Berryhill: 441 or 48 percent

Melson: 226 or 25 percent

Seibert: 249 or 27 percent

## **[Greg Albritton, Harry D'Olive emerge from crowded field, will meet in Senate District 22 runoff \(al.com\)](#)**

Former state Rep. Greg Albritton and Bay Minette lawyer Harry D'Olive emerged from a crowded Republican field in the Alabama Senate District 22 primary Tuesday to set up a head-to-head runoff next month.

In complete but unofficial results, Albritton was running first with about 33 percent of the vote, and D'Olive was second with 28 percent, both comfortably ahead of the rest of the field.

The winner may or may not face Democratic opposition in November in the sprawling district, which runs from Choctaw County to Lillian in Baldwin County and takes in all or parts of eight counties. Incumbent Marc Keahey pulled out of the race after the qualifying period, giving the Democratic Party to replace him with another candidate. But it had not yet done so by Tuesday.

Even before Keahey's withdrawal, the race drew strong interest from Republicans. Redistricting prompted by the 2010 census made the district much friendlier to Republicans. With population growth in Baldwin County, neighboring District 32 along the Eastern Shore and south Baldwin contracted in a smaller geographic area. That opened up more of strongly Republican-leaning Baldwin for District 22.

The new district also is more white, which in Alabama often is synonymous with Republicans.

"You had five people in this. It was almost mathematically impossible to get through this without a runoff," said Albritton, who is from Conecuh County.

D'Olive, who briefly served as Baldwin County Probate to finish his father's term but lost election to a full term, won nearly 49 percent of the vote in his home county.

"I was very pleased with the turnout in Baldwin County and the support I received in Baldwin County," he said.

The five candidates who ran in the GOP primary all bore striking similarities. All white men with roughly comparable campaign treasuries, they expressed similar views on guns, education and economic development. They differed mostly in what issues they focused on.

Without sharp contrasts on the issues, the race may have turned on geography. The three Bay Minette candidates appear to have carved up the Baldwin County vote. Joyner and Albritton battled for supremacy in the rural counties to the north.

After Albritton and D'Olive, retired Army chaplain Stephen Sexton finished third, tea party activist Danny Joyner came in fourth and former management consultant Jeff Peacock brought up the rear.

"I thought I ran a good race," Sexton said. "Yes, I'm disappointed I didn't get in the runoff. But this being my first race, I think I did very well."

Joyner, who has run for the seat four previous times, said he gave it his best shot.

"I entered the race because I felt like God led me to do that," he said. "It became a crowded field. We did our best."

## **DeMarco vs. Palmer for all the marbles; how we got here and what to watch for next (Yellowhammer News)**

With very little drama taking place in any statewide campaigns, the battle over Alabama's 6th Congressional District seat has been the marquee race of this primary season.

Things got off to a strange start on Monday, Sept. 30 of last year when 11-term incumbent congressman Spencer Bachus broke the news live on Fox 6 that he would not seek another term, but the newscaster clearly didn't understand how big of a scoop she had and continued asking him unrelated questions.

Washington, D.C. publication Roll Call was first out of the gate later that morning with a list of potential candidates who might run for the seat. Here's what Roll Call's Emily Cahn wrote in her speculative piece:

- State Sen. Cam Ward, who served as Bachus' district director in the late 1990s before leaving to run for the state legislature.
- State Sen. Scott Beason, a member of the tea party who waged an unsuccessful primary challenge to Bachus in 2012.
- Alabama Republican Party Chairman Bill Armistead, a social conservative who used to serve in Ward's state Senate seat.
- State Rep. Jack Williams, chairman of Alabama's House Commerce Committee.
- State Rep. Paul DeMarco, chairman of Alabama's House Judiciary Committee.
- State Sen. Slade Blackwell, whose district is located in the most affluent part of the 6th District.
- Cliff Sims, CEO of Yellowhammer News.
- Chad Mathis, an orthopedic surgeon and member of the tea party.

Most of the potential candidates speculated about early on opted out of running, but Mathis was the first to officially announce his candidacy on Oct. 8. He appears to have been planning to challenge Bachus in the primary and had already lined up the support of many major national conservative organization, including Club for Growth and FreedomWorks, who would go on to play a significant role later in the primary.

Gary Palmer jumped in the race Oct. 24, followed by State Rep. Paul DeMarco Oct. 27, Harbert executive Will Brooke Nov. 19 and small businessman Tom Vigneulle Jan. 23. State Sen. Scott Beason rounded out the field at the last possible second on qualifying day, Feb. 7.

From that point, the race went through four major shifts:

## 1. Stackin' cash

The early storyline about the AL-06 race centered on candidate fundraising. Some national publications speculated that it would be the "most moneyed" primary in the south, and possibly the country. Chad Mathis, Paul DeMarco, Will Brooke and Gary Palmer separated themselves from the other three candidates early on by posting significant fundraising hauls. Mathis and Palmer faded a bit as time went by, and Will Brooke was aided by large chunks of personal donations to his campaign, but DeMarco continued to power through thanks to his strong business community ties, especially among Birmingham's major law firms.

## 2. Mathis sets everyone on fire

Dr. Chad Mathis finished in 4th in the AL-06 primary

Dr. Chad Mathis finished in 4th in the AL-06 primary

Mathis went hard negative early and often. He dubbed Beason, Brooke, DeMarco and Palmer "The Gange of Four" and went after them for what he described as "their sins on conservatism." It got so bad at one point that Beason, Brooke and Palmer held a joint press conference to decry Mathis' scorched earth campaign tactics. Even Alabama Republican Party Chairman Bill Armistead took a shot at Mathis, calling his campaign tactics "not good for the Party."

But it was working. Mathis rose from relative obscurity to a serious contender to get into a runoff with DeMarco, who has been the frontrunner from the beginning.

Club for Growth, a staunchly conservative Washington, D.C.-based PAC that was supporting Mathis, also chipped in a few hundred thousand dollars worth of television ads criticizing Will Brooke for past campaign donations he had made to Democrats. More on that in a minute.

## 3. Brooke kneecaps Mathis

After initially planning not to spend any campaign cash addressing the attacks from Mathis and the groups supporting him, the Brooke campaign finally responded by blistering Mathis with roughly \$300k of hard-hitting ads on television, radio and mail.

Mathis' momentum stalled.

## 4. Palmer pulls a Bentley, shoots up the middle

Gary Palmer celebrates his second place finish, which secured him a place in the AL-06 runoff

Gary Palmer celebrates his second place finish, which secured him a place in the AL-06 runoff

Back in the 2010 Alabama gubernatorial primary, Republican frontrunners Bradley Byrne and Tim James traded shots, while little-known insurgent candidate Robert Bentley stayed out of the direct line of fire. He ended up pulling off a stunning upset.

Flash forward to 2014's AL-06 primary and Gary Palmer has to this point executed a very similar combination of political maneuvering and good ol'-fashioned luck.

But here's where it gets interesting. Club for Growth, which was backing Mathis, thought they were doing him a favor by going after Brooke, and there's no doubt they helped knock Brooke down. But that onslaught of negative ads compelled Brooke to fight back, which ended up knocking Mathis out of the runoff and allowing Palmer to skate through.

To Palmer's credit, he has run a steady, gaffe-free campaign to this point.

At the end of the night on Tuesday, here's where things stood:

Candidate | Votes | Percentage

Paul DeMarco | 30,842 | 33%

Gary Palmer | 18,627 | 20%

Scott Beason | 14,428 | 15%

Chad Mathis | 14,400 | 15%

Will Brooke | 13,076 | 14%

Tom Vigneulle | 2,394 | 3%

Rob Shattuck | 587 | 1%

So what happens next?

The runoff is set to take place 6 weeks from now on Tuesday, July 15. It's going to be an incredibly low-turnout affair, meaning the impact of traditional advertising is somewhat diminished, and grassroots organizational skills becomes a real asset.

One of the DeMarco campaign's consultants, Chris Brown, has made quite a name for himself winning low-turnout special elections in Alabama legislative races. He will play a significant role in trying to get DeMarco to 50% + 1.

Both candidates should be able to gather another round of cash locally, especially DeMarco. But the question is, will any of the third-party groups who initially supported Mathis now shift their allegiance to Palmer. It is well-known that Palmer solicited the same groups that Mathis did, but Mathis had gotten to them first and secured commitments.



Club for Growth and several other conservative groups have been engaged in an ongoing feud with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce over the last couple of election cycles. If Club for Growth goes all-in behind Palmer, the Chamber may feel compelled to engage on DeMarco's behalf, which would set off another high-dollar clash.

We should have a pretty good idea of how things are going to shake out by the end of this week.

## **Alabama secretary of state, auditor's races headed to runoffs (AP)**

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — The hottest races in Tuesday's statewide Alabama Republican primary were not for the top spot of governor, but for other statewide offices.

State Rep. John Merrill of Tuscaloosa and former Montgomery County Probate Judge Reese McKinney head to a July 15 runoff in the race to become Alabama's next secretary of state.

Merrill led primary voting with about 40 percent of the total votes cast. McKinney was a close second with 38 percent of the total.

Crenshaw County Probate Judge Jim Perdue finished third with 22 percent.

The Republican nominee will face Democrat Lula Albert-Kaigler in the general election Nov. 4.

Republican candidates also face a runoff in the race to become Alabama's state auditor, but Mobile attorney Jim Zeigler heads into that vote with a more substantial margin after primary voting.

Zeigler had 47 percent of the vote in the Republican primary, but retired Shelby County businessman Dale Peterson apparently secured a spot in the runoff with 24 percent of the vote.

Adam Thompson, deputy chief of staff for the secretary of state, ran third with 19 percent, and former assistant state conservation commissioner Hobbie Sealey had 10 percent.

Zeigler and Peterson had the most name recognition in the low-budget race. Zeigler is a former member of the Public Service Commission who earned the nickname "Mr. 49" percent, after narrowly losing multiple other statewide races.

Peterson became a YouTube sensation with his 2010 gun-toting campaign ads for state agriculture commissioner.

The winner of the GOP primary will face Democrat Miranda Joseph in November.

## **In state school board races, Common Core opponents had the ferocity but not the votes (al.com)**

If the three races for the Alabama Board of Education were over Common Core, then Common Core won by a split decision.

Two candidates who have tacitly supported the national educational standards appeared headed for victory Tuesday night.

District 8 incumbent Mary Scott Hunter defeated her opponent, Mike Parsons, 53 percent to 47 percent.

Meanwhile, in District 6, Jacksonville State University economics professor Cynthia McCarty defeated retired teacher Patricia McGriff. With 97 percent of the votes counted, McCarty was leading McGriff with 53 percent of the vote to 47 percent.

Of the anti-Common Core candidates running in the Republican primary, only District 2 incumbent Betty Peters found her way to victory Tuesday night. With 88 percent of the votes counted, she was leading former Eufaula school superintendent Barry Sadler, 59 percent to 41 percent.

The Common Core-friendly candidates had major support from business interests, out-raising their anti-Common Core opponent five-to-one.

However, throughout the race, those candidates couched their campaign messages in softer terms, emphasizing that Alabama had modified their controversial national educational standards.

## **Oden wins in Public Service Commission Place 1; runoff established for Place 2 (al.com)**

MONTGOMERY -- The Public Service Commission races did not fail to intrigue on primary election night. An incumbent commissioner won in Place 1 and the other incumbent will have to fight in a July 15 runoff.

In the Place 2 race, incumbent Commissioner Terry Dunn and challenger Chris "Chip" Beeker" have won spots in the July 15 runoff election.

With 98 percent of state precincts in, Beeker led, 132,896, or 39 percent, to Dunn's 110,867, or 33 percent. Full results here.

Birmingham businessman Jonathan Barbee got 54,047, or 16 percent. Jefferson County educator Phillip Brown got 42,885, or 13 percent.

Because neither Beeker nor Dunn got 50 percent of the vote, the race heads to a statewide runoff election on July 15.

The two men never took swipes at each other. Until, it seems, Beeker was to face Dunn, one on one, in the runoff.

"By awarding the most primary votes to a strong, conservative fighter like myself, Alabama Republicans have sent the message that we cannot afford to have a timid and weak-kneed commissioner representing us on the Alabama Public Service Commission," Beeker said in statement emailed to AL.com. "If we are going to protect jobs in Alabama, we must have a Public Service Commissioner who isn't afraid to stick out his chin, hitch up his pants, and fight back against Barack Obama and his asinine environmental mandates."

When asked about the statement on the phone, Beeker said voters were obviously comfortable with his message.

Dunn had been attacked on the right for not seeming to support the coal industry enough. His suggestion that the PSC should have a review of Alabama Power's rates prompted criticism of Dunn -- including suggestions he was an environmentalist first -- and three men lined up to challenge him.

All along, Dunn insisted he was for the coal industry and was not a "RINO" -- Republican in Name Only. Dunn did not return a message immediately.

Terry Dunn.jpg

But Beeker took advantage of the criticism aimed at Dunn, and rode a wave of discontent with Obama and the EPA's policies. Beeker also picked up endorsements from Manufacture Alabama and the Alabama Retail Association.

In Place 1, incumbent Commissioner Jeremy Oden beat Kathy Peterson, the challenger, in a surprisingly tight race.

With 98 percent of precincts reporting, Oden, the incumbent Place 1 commissioner, had 187,920 votes, or 52 percent, to Peterson's 171,014, or 48 percent.

While Oden was the incumbent, he was appointed in 2012. He said he had to scramble to beat Peterson in a name-recognition contest. Meanwhile, third-party phone calls went out near the end that blasted Oden's record.

Oden was upbeat on Tuesday night.

"It was a great campaign," said Oden. "I am glad we got to know (Alabama voters) and thank them for their support."

Peterson did not immediately return messages.

The PSC is a three-member elected body that oversees regulation of utilities, gas pipelines, railways and more.

No Democrats have filed to run in the fall in either PSC race.

## **[Now a look at your potential GOP field for the 2018 primary for governor. That's right! 2018 \(al.com\)](#)**

MONTGOMERY, Alabama – In the it's-never-too-early-to-look-to-the-next-primary-election in 2018, here is what we can say today:

big luther.jpg

Alabama AG Luther Strange

Gov. Robert Bentley has won his second and last GOP nomination for governor. He will be a heavy favorite in November to win his second term.

So, the governor for these purposes today has already begun his days as a lame duck, at least so far as the 2018 Republican primary and general election is concerned.

So, where does Tuesday's "shakedown cruise" for 2018 leave us?

Looking through the crystal ball here is the list of potential GOP candidates who may well begin positioning themselves for a run at the state's top office four years from now.

For the purposes of this story I interviewed a half-dozen political professionals who make their living off this business. Most of them I have known for a long time. They talked openly and honestly on condition that I would not name them. Most of them didn't want to venture out four years ahead and risk looking like fools. But they didn't mind helping me do it.

Speaker Mike Hubbard:

Conventional political wisdom a year ago said that Hubbard, 52, would begin his campaign for the GOP 2018 nomination for governor today – the day after he won re-election to his seat in the Legislature and almost assuredly his second term as speaker.

But that is not what is likely happening today because Hubbard has not yet heard from the most important constituents in Lee County: members of a grand jury that have been looking into possible corruption in the State House Hubbard leads. Should that grand jury indict the speaker, all bets are off regarding any run for governor in 2018. Hubbard has strongly maintained he has done nothing wrong and after more than a year of looking, the grand jury has handed nothing down regarding Hubbard. But the work of that grand jury remains the wild card in the 2018 election season.

Luther Strange:

Strange, 61, is facing Democrat Joe Hubbard in the November general election and is considered a strong favorite to serve a second term as attorney general. Insiders know that Strange would really like to be United States Senator Luther Strange but that looks increasingly unlikely as U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby has said he will seek a sixth term in 2016 when he will be 82.

So assuming Strange wins in November, what are his chances in a race for governor? Again, we're back to Hubbard. It's Strange's office that opened the investigation into Hubbard, a task not unlike

picking up a wasp nest. If Strange's office is able to indict Hubbard and convict him, his chances of getting the nomination go way up. If he doesn't, his chances of getting strung to death go way up.

Bradley Byrne:

Bradley\_Byrne.jpg

Rep. Bradley Byrne

The newly minted Mobile Congressman was on his way to winning the GOP nomination for governor in 2010 when his campaign was derailed by Paul Hubbert, the one-time powerful leader of the Alabama Education Association who Byrne had spent his political life opposing. Hubbert, in his last bit of political stagecraft, mounted a devastating campaign against Byrne, threw money and support into Bentley's campaign and at the end of the day was able to deny Byrne the nomination. Insiders know that Byrne, 59, has chafed at that defeat and for most of the last four years mulled over challenging Bentley until Rep. Joe Bonner unexpectedly resigned his seat in Congress a year ago. Byrne subsequently won that seat in a special election. The question now is will Byrne give up an almost sure congressional seat to try one last time at governor?

Del Marsh:

Marshpic.jpg

Sen. Del Marsh

Marsh, who is the President Pro Tem of the Alabama Senate, has proved a keen manager of the egos that dominate that body. A former vice chairman of the Republican Party when Hubbard was party chair, Marsh, 57, emerged from Hubbard's shadow in early 2013 when he secretly developed a school choice plan that he was able to get Hubbard and Bentley to sing onto and which he then skillfully pushed through the Legislature. While Marsh's signature bill has been unconstitutional by a Montgomery circuit judge, it's likely the Alabama Supreme Court will overturn that decision allowing Marsh to campaign on the law if he chooses to run for the top job.

Martha Roby:

Martha-Roby-jpg.jpg

Rep. Martha Roby

The Wiregrass Congresswoman has emerged as a rising star in both the U.S. House of Representatives and in the Alabama GOP. Her recent appointment to a special committee that will probe the killings in Benghazi in 2012 by House Speaker John Boehner has potentially positioned her

to raise her profile both nationally and in Alabama. Roby at just 37 is the youngest member of the Alabama D.C. delegation and one of the younger GOP stars in the state. At that age and holding a safe seat in the Congress, Roby is not pushed to do anything for the next few years but hold onto her seat and survey the political landscape mulling over her options.

Tim James:

tim-james.jpg

Tim James

James, 52, failed by a whisker in 2010 to make it into the GOP runoff for governor. The difference between he and Bentley was so close that there had to be a recount, where Bentley prevailed by a handful of votes.

Coming that close to the brass ring and not getting it can be hard to take – ask Bradley Byrne. James, the son of former two-term governor Fob James ran unsuccessfully for the GOP nomination in 2002 as well. Does he have a third run in him? Does the fire still burn in his belly the way it did particularly in 2010?

Finally two wild cards (other than that Lee County grand jury).

iroy moore.jpg

Chief Justice Roy Moore

Roy Moore:

The current chief justice will see his term end in 2018. Will he opt for another run for the court or will he try for a third time to grab the GOP nomination for governor? Moore, 67, challenged Gov. Bob Riley in 2006 and was beaten badly. He tried again in 2010 and finished well out of the running. Like James, does he have another run in him?

Finally, Artur Davis:

220px-Artur\_Davis.jpg

Former Rep. Artur Davis

The former Democratic Congressman from Birmingham turned Republican is known to be mulling over a race for mayor of his home town, Montgomery in 2015. Davis who made a historic bid to win the Democratic Party nomination for governor in 2010 but lost to Ron Sparks, was once a rising star in the

Democratic Party. He shocked that party in 2012 when he became a Republican and supporter of Mitt Romney. Since then Davis has made several trips into the state where he has been warmly embraced by the GOP establishment.

Finally, two more names I'll add and put them under the category of "Who's That?"

Sen. Rusty Glover, R-Mobile. Some of my "insiders" say he is seriously thinking about 2018. That's a new one on me.

Greg Canfield, currently Alabama secretary of commerce under Bentley. A former legislator from Vestavia Hills, Canfield has been Bentley's point man in recruiting industry and businesses into the state.

Finally, a little reminder about this list. Had I done this list the day after the 2006 GOP primary for governor, Robert Bentley's name would not have appeared on it -- anywhere -- as a potential 2010 candidate.

These things have a way of being both predictable and unpredictable. I know that makes no sense. But that's politics.

Enjoy your Wednesday!

## **Officials: Alabama's photo ID law working smoothly (AP)**

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Election officials reported no major problems with the first Alabama election where voters had to show a photo ID, but one voter group disagreed.

"I haven't heard of any complaints about photo ID," said Secretary of State Jim Bennett, Alabama's chief election official.

A 2011 law requires voters to show a photo ID, such as a driver's license or passport, but it wasn't implemented until Tuesday's primary election. Republican proponents had said the law would help prevent voter fraud, while Democratic opponents said it would make voting harder for the poor and elderly.



Bennett, a Republican, said his office spent about \$900,000 on a campaign to educate voters about the requirements and to issue more than 2,300 photo IDs for people who had none.

Empower Alabama, a group that registers and mobilizes voters, reported problems. In one case, 93-year-old Willie Mims of Brewton being turned away from the polls for lack of a photo ID, said Jenny McCharen, the group's digital director.

"He's actually been voting since World War II," she said. "This is the first election he was not able to vote in."

She said Mims, a World War II veteran, was not offered an opportunity to vote a provisional ballot even though the law requires it. A provisional ballot is counted if a person produces proper identification later.

Bradley Davidson, one of Empower Alabama's founders, said some people were asked specifically for a driver's license, when other forms of photo ID are acceptable.

A Democratic state senator who opposed the voter ID legislation in 2011, Bobby Singleton of Greensboro, said he conducted a voter education program in his west Alabama district before Tuesday's primary and he had not heard of problems.

But he said the primary had low turnout, with participants who usually vote in every election. He said the test will come in the general election, when the turnout is traditionally much larger.

"If there are going to be problems, you will see them in November," Singleton said.

In rural Lowndes County, Probate Judge John E. Hulett said he heard of only one person without a required ID. He said the man was able to vote because poll workers knew him and could attest to his identity, which is allowed under the law.

In Montgomery, Clifford Terrell, pastor of Gospel Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, said he had no problem producing a photo ID to vote. "I think it is imperative to show an ID. We show an ID for anything significant," he said.

Joan Sampson, a retired school teacher, said she showed a photo ID to vote in Montgomery, but didn't like it. "It's a very bad law because we are United States citizens," she said.

Bernard Simelton, president of the Alabama NAACP, said he saw no problems while serving as a poll worker Tuesday in Limestone County in north Alabama, but he said voters at his polling place were mostly middle-class citizens who wouldn't have any trouble getting an ID.

In one incident that did not involve voter ID, a gun rights supporter in Alabaster took a loaded pistol to go to the polls, but poll workers called a deputy who made the man store his gun in his truck. The polling place had a sign in the door saying firearms are prohibited.