

## Did Texas Republicans Outfox Themselves?

Howls have been heard coming from GOP quarters in Houston, as the party's unofficial strategy—i.e., urging Republicans voters to cast ballots in the Democratic primary to aid the weaker of the two Democrats—seems to be backfiring, as the GOP “strategists” are increasingly confused as to which candidate that would be!

The idea, which some attribute to Karl Rove, was to throw enough votes to the Democratic candidate (Texas allows “crossover” voting) who would be easier to beat in the November general election. More astute Democratic analysts see this as part of the ongoing Bloomberg campaign, to wreak havoc on the Democratic Party in the months leading up to the nominating convention.

Working from earlier poll numbers, they thought Obama would be easier to defeat, so some Republicans voted early for Obama; others who voted for Obama were driven by long-term hostility toward the Clintons, hoping

they could finish off those pesky Clintons in Texas; still others, like right-wing windbag Rush Limbaugh, have been urging Republicans to vote for Hillary, to defeat Obama. Reports from precincts in solidly Republican areas show a highly disproportionate number voting in the Democratic primary.

As voters went to the polls on March 4, leading Republicans began to realize that this strategy was backfiring. It seems that these oh-so-clever Republicans were unable to figure out which Democrat was the weaker candidate! There are credible reports that some dismayed Party leaders spent the weekend trying to figure out how to convince Republicans to vote in the GOP primary, without spilling the beans about their sly plan to disrupt the Democrats. Rank-and-file GOP voters called local right-wing radio talk shows on the morning of the voting to complain that, after voting for Obama (or Hillary) in the Democratic primary, they discovered they could not vote for Republican candidates in the other races on the Republican primary ballot.

Exit polls showed that 9% of the votes cast in the Texas Democratic primary were cast by self-identified Republicans. Of these, 52% voted for Obama.

—*Harley Schlanger*