

# Super Tuesday 1988: Regional Results and National Implications

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*Fourteen southern and border states established a same-day presidential primary on 8 March 1988. This analysis shows that this Super Tuesday, in several senses, was less than super. The results turned out to be less satisfying than its Democratic founders preferred but less upsetting than its critics anticipated. Despite Super Tuesday, Iowa and New Hampshire remained dominant in the 1988 presidential primaries. Although voter turnout increased slightly over 1984 and the results contributed mightily toward settling the nomination in the Republican party, Super Tuesday neither settled the Democratic nomination nor gave meaningful momentum to the more moderate Democratic candidates.*

On 8 March 1988 southern Democrats converged on the polls for a one-day presidential primary in hopes of (1) increasing the influence of the South in the Democratic presidential nomination and shifting attention and influence from earlier events in Iowa and New Hampshire; (2) increasing voter turnout in the Democratic primaries and caucuses and bringing moderate voters back to the Democratic party; and (3) increasing the likelihood of nominating a more centrist candidate than persons such as Walter Mondale, George McGovern, or Hubert Humphrey—ideally an electable Democrat, but at least a candidate southern Democrats could politically afford to be seen with in public.<sup>1</sup>

Did they succeed? This article considers the ways in which Super Tuesday

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<sup>1</sup>For an analysis of these goals and whether Super Tuesday seemed an appropriate means of realizing them, see Harold W. Stanley and Charles D. Hadley, "The Southern Presidential Primary: Regional Intentions with National Implications," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 17 (Summer 1987): 83-100; Stanley and Hadley, "Expect a Super Tuesday Muddle," *The New York Times*, 4 March 1988, p. 27; and David S. Castle, "A Southern Regional Presidential Primary in 1988: Will It Work As Planned?" *Election Politics* 4 (Summer 1987): 6-10.

did and did not fulfill its founders' expectations. The founders' goals frame the analysis, but the discussion also incorporates the expectations and reactions of the critics and political opponents.

In the 1987 *Publius* annual review, nearly a year before Super Tuesday, we described how and why a southern Super Tuesday, established in 1980, expanded into a massive event in which nearly a third of the delegates were selected to both national conventions.<sup>2</sup> Super Tuesday was not a part of the Democratic National Committee's reforms that have changed the presidential nominating process since 1968.<sup>3</sup> After the 1984 election loss to Ronald Reagan, the Democratic National Committee was not anxious to undertake another round of rules revision. The Fairness Commission even relaxed rules governing presidential delegate selection in favor of more state party leeway.<sup>4</sup> Southern state Democratic party leaders and elected officials, guided by the Southern Legislative Conference, took up the slack on rules reform by establishing a southern regional primary. Such multi-state efforts to organize regional primaries in presidential nominating politics may mark the years ahead. Those pondering such regional primaries would do well to pause and reflect on the experience of Super Tuesday 1988.

Although Democrats built Super Tuesday, many southern Republican leaders saw Super Tuesday as a unique opportunity. Expectations ran high that Democrats had given southern Republicans a superb opening for party growth. Republicans were so confident that the Democrats had erred in establishing it, that they were certain Super Tuesday would not be repeated in 1992. Southern Republicans wanted to make Super Tuesday a referendum on conservative or liberal values. The Republicans portrayed Democratic presidential candidates as liberals, painted their candidates as conservatives, and encouraged comparative partisan shopping. In the words of President Ronald Reagan:

"Super Tuesday" presents our party with a tremendous opportunity—to convince those who share our values to vote for the Republican candidate of their choice in the Republican primary. Now, in my humble opinion, it shouldn't be too hard. . . . Any one of our Republican candidates stands head and shoulders above those running in the other party. And Republican candidates

<sup>2</sup>Stanley and Hadley, "The Southern Presidential Primary." Southern Democrats did not go it alone on Super Tuesday. Twenty states and American Samoa combined to create, short of the conventions themselves, the largest single-day event ever in the presidential nomination process. Republican as well as Democratic contests were involved.

<sup>3</sup>On the reforms, see William Crotty and John S. Jackson III, *Presidential Primaries and Nominations* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1983), pp. 27-54. On the dynamics of the reformed nomination process, see Larry M. Bartels, "Expectations and Preferences in Presidential Nominating Campaigns," *The American Political Science Review* 79 (September 1975): 812-814, and *Presidential Primaries and the Dynamics of Public Choice* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988); and John H. Aldrich, *Before the Convention: Strategies and Choices in Presidential Nomination Campaigns* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

<sup>4</sup>Rhodes Cook, "Party and Elected Officials Get More Clout: Democrats Alter Rules Slightly in Effort to Broaden Party Base," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* 43 (26 October 1985): 2158-2159.

all agree with the people of the South. . . . Yes, the values of Southern voters are best represented by our Republican candidates for President.<sup>5</sup>

Republicans had other goals: increasing turnout in Republican presidential primaries, particularly in "open" primary states where voters could choose either party's primary on the day of the vote and, in closed primary states, raising Republican registration through mobilization and party switching. Increasing Republican turnout was expected to draw centrist whites away from the Democrats, leaving the Democratic primary voters (and thus the favored candidates) all the more left-of-center.<sup>6</sup>

Critics of Super Tuesday flourished. They contended that a southern regional primary was politically naive. It would serve as an echo chamber for Iowa and New Hampshire rather than a launching pad for a mainstream candidacy; Republicans, not Democrats, might benefit more from the South focusing on presidential politics; and moderates attracted to the Republican primaries would leave the Democratic primaries even more under the sway of left-of-center influences.<sup>7</sup>

#### SUPER TUESDAY RESULTS

Reforms often bring unanticipated consequences. When southern Democrats enacted Super Tuesday, hoping it would settle the presidential nomination, they did not intend to help the Republicans rally around George Bush. Yet Republicans did rally to Bush and the Democrats were left divided: Michael Dukakis, Al Gore, and Jesse Jackson gained almost equal shares of delegates and votes. The Democratic muddle contrasted vividly with the Republican clarity. Reviewing how the candidates fared offers an essential perspective for evaluating whether Super Tuesday achieved its founders' objectives.

The Bush sweep—16 out of 17 Republican contests went his way on 8 March<sup>8</sup>—and winner-take-all rules gave Bush enough delegates to make the Republican nomination seem inevitable. Prior to Super Tuesday, Bush and Dole had secured the support of equal shares of national convention delegates (Table 1). After Super Tuesday, Bush had the backing of 74 percent of the delegates selected, while Dole had only 17 percent.

<sup>5</sup>Videotaped Remarks by the President, Southern Republican Leadership Conference, New Orleans, 11 February 1988.

<sup>6</sup>Haley Barbour, 9 January 1988, memorandum to the Southern Republican Exchange on the Southern Republican Primary Project.

<sup>7</sup>Dick Lodge, the Democratic state chairman in Tennessee and one of the architects of Super Tuesday, responded to such criticisms in this way: "Nothing is without risk and our friends in the Washington political community are happy to tell us why it's a bad idea. . . . But it can't be any worse than now, and if this doesn't work, we'll change it again." Quoted in Phil Gailey, "Southern Democrats Press Plan for a Regional Primary," *The New York Times*, 8 March 1986, p. 9. For broad-ranging critical assessments, see R. W. Apple, Jr., "Super Tuesday: An Experiment Whose Time May Be Past," *The New York Times*, 8 March 1988, p. 11; and David Broder, "No More Super Tuesdays," *The Washington Post*, 2 March 1988, p. A17.

<sup>8</sup>Bush had won the Republican primary in South Carolina on 5 March. He won all sixteen primaries on Super Tuesday, losing only the Republican caucus in Washington State to Robertson.

TABLE I  
Delegate Support, Before and After Super Tuesday, 1988

Candidate	1 March	9 March
Democrat		
Dukakis	14.2%	27.8%
Gephardt	10.4	8.7
Gore	3.8	21.2
Jackson	6.2	24.2
Others and uncommitted	65.4	18.1
Delegates selected	451	1,638
Republican		
Bush	35.1	73.5
Dole	34.5	17.0
Kemp	20.1	4.1
Others and uncommitted	10.4	5.4
Delegates selected	174	959

SOURCE: Calculated from Associated Press tallies as reported in *National Journal*, 5 March 1988, p. 616, and 12 March 1988, p. 692.

NOTE: Candidate delegate support percentages are based on delegates selected through the date indicated.

Not only was the nomination nearly settled, but Pat Robertson's candidacy, potentially divisive for the Republican party, essentially was laid to rest. The poor Robertson showing on 5 March in South Carolina, a state he had targeted for a showdown with Bush, was followed by weak showings throughout the South.<sup>9</sup>

On the Democratic side, three candidates could claim victory. Gore's southern strategy paid off in that he carried five states. Jackson combined solid support among blacks with enough white votes to place first in five states. Dukakis finished first in Florida and Texas, the two largest southern states, and carried Massachusetts, Maryland, and Rhode Island to yield five primary wins. Prior to Super Tuesday, Dukakis had edged out Richard Gephardt 14 to 10 in percentage of delegates secured (Table I). After Super Tuesday, Dukakis led with a larger percentage (28), but Jackson had surged (24 percent), as had Gore (21 percent).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>The dismal results doomed Robertson's 1988 candidacy, but the divisive potential his candidacy posed still lingers. Robertson supporters have had greater success transforming southern Republican organizations by taking control at the grass roots. On this point see John C. Green and James L. Guth, "The Christian Right in the Republican Party: The Case of Pat Robertson's Supporters," *Journal of Politics* 50 (February 1988): 150-165, especially 162.

<sup>10</sup>Dukakis nosed out Jackson for the most delegates gained in all states voting on Super Tuesday (31.8 percent to 31.5 percent), Gore was third with 28 percent. In southern and border states,

Winnowing also took place. Gephardt carried his home state of Missouri, but doing this and nothing more doomed him. Super Tuesday occurred before some candidates dropped out, but it would be an overstatement to say that Super Tuesday eliminated them. Gary Hart was finished after New Hampshire (if not before), but remained in the race and quit on 11 March. Jack Kemp was doomed after his poor showing in South Carolina before Super Tuesday, but postponed withdrawing until 10 March.

#### SUPER TUESDAY AND SOUTHERN INFLUENCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION PROCESS

There are several reasons to doubt that Super Tuesday magnified the influence of the South. Political influence turns in part on numbers. Scheduling southern delegate selections for the same day called attention to the substantial southern share of convention delegates. However, influence through numbers depends on the degree of unity. Southern Democrats divided their votes among three candidates, results which attest to their political diversity. Expectations of politically potent unity were ill-founded. Southern clout was most evident in the Republican contest where Super Tuesday did for the Republicans what some hoped it would do for the Democrats, namely, select the nominee and solidify the party behind the candidate.

For Democrats, the size of Super Tuesday fuzzed its focus. No Democratic candidate competed seriously in all the Super Tuesday states. The major candidates husbanded their resources and targeted presumably responsive states. "They were forced to pitch their campaigns to geographical, racial, cultural, and ideological slices of the electorate rather than appealing to the whole—exactly the opposite of what the Southern leaders had planned."<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, since Super Tuesday did not decide the Democratic nomination, the South sat out the rest of the contest. Other than superdelegates, there were no additional southern delegates to be secured by candidates. The "sorting out" of Dukakis, Jackson, and Gore took place in nonsouthern states. In one sense, Super Tuesday's early organizational success helped doom its impact. Bunching all southern and border state primaries on a single day robbed a candidate with southern appeal of similar state primaries to follow up in with wins. After Super Tuesday, Gore's forays into midwestern and northern primaries found less receptive voters. Outside the South, Jackson's campaign was disadvantaged in that blacks made up small shares of the Democratic primary voters, and his white support was not sufficient to overcome the vote totals of Dukakis, especially once Gore suspended his campaign. Unlike Gore and Jackson, Dukakis' candidacy was relatively advantaged by the location of primaries after Super Tuesday.<sup>12</sup>

the ranking was reversed: Gore 29 percent, Jackson 27, and Dukakis 22.

<sup>11</sup>R. W. Apple, Jr., "Super Tuesday," p. 11.

<sup>12</sup>Bartels, *Presidential Primaries*, pp. 181-183, has a suggestive ranking of states by liberalism scores.

Voters in these later contests did not seem to take their cues from Super Tuesday voters. No bounce from Super Tuesday was visible in Illinois, the next primary. Senator Paul Simon skipped Super Tuesday, but had little trouble in his home state fending off two Super Tuesday "winners"—Gore and Dukakis. Jackson proved more formidable because of the sizable black vote in Illinois.

Was Super Tuesday an echo chamber for Iowa and New Hampshire? No and yes. Super Tuesday reversed the results of Iowa. First-place finishers there, Gephardt and Dole, came to grief on Super Tuesday. Both later dropped out. Robertson's fortunes were raised by Iowa, but turned down in New Hampshire and in the South. The nominees in both parties, Dukakis and Bush, placed no higher than third in Iowa. Super Tuesday essentially echoed the New Hampshire results insofar as Dukakis did well and Bush did very well.<sup>13</sup> Given these results, in 1992 Iowa may not remain such a preoccupation of presidential candidates.<sup>14</sup>

Super Tuesday reformers had hoped that the pile of delegates at stake on Super Tuesday would encourage candidates to downplay, perhaps even skip, Iowa and New Hampshire, to come down South and start serious campaigning there. Gore claimed to do that, others did not. Gephardt took the opposite tack, deciding in December to pull down his southern operations and reassign his southern staffs to Iowa.<sup>15</sup> Gephardt won Iowa, thereby getting into the ranks of the frontrunners. Gephardt's stumble on Super Tuesday may have had more to do with money management than with his early emphasis on Iowa at the expense of the South. Dukakis and Gore outspent Gephardt in the southern and border Super Tuesday states by two to one. The money shortage restrained Gephardt from responding to critical ads run by Dukakis and Gore immediately prior to Super Tuesday.<sup>16</sup> Polls showed that Gephardt remained competitive in the days leading up to Super Tuesday. Yet the four-way split became a three-way split as late-deciding voters spurned Gephardt in favor of Gore or Dukakis.<sup>17</sup>

Super Tuesday reformers desired to downplay the importance of Iowa and New Hampshire, but this backfired: the delegates at stake on Super Tues-

<sup>13</sup>For an examination of the previous influence of the New Hampshire primary, see William G. Mayer, "The New Hampshire Primary: A Historical Overview," *Media and Momentum: The New Hampshire Primary and Nomination Politics*, eds. Gary R. Orren and Nelson W. Polsby (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, 1987), pp. 9-41.

<sup>14</sup>For a review of the Iowa caucuses before 1988, see Hugh Winebrenner, *The Iowa Precinct Caucuses: The Making of a Media Event* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1987).

<sup>15</sup>Only the Florida Gephardt campaign remained operative, primarily for fund-raising reasons (Kenneth S. Allen, "Gephardt Curtailing Campaign in South, Except Florida," *St. Petersburg Times*, 23 December 1987, p. 4A).

<sup>16</sup>Unlike Gore, Gephardt spent a disproportionate amount in his home state (conveniently located next to Iowa)—18 percent of his total Super Tuesday campaign spending in Missouri versus less than 1 percent by Gore in Tennessee.

<sup>17</sup>Exit polls conducted by *The New York Times*/CBS News in fourteen southern and border states interviewed 9,176 Democratic voters. Of the 31 percent who claimed to have decided how to vote on Super Tuesday or "since Saturday," Dukakis and Gore were backed by about 30 percent each and Gephardt and Jackson by 16 percent each. *The New York Times*/CBS News Poll, "Southern Democratic Primary Exit Poll, 8 March 1988," p. 1.

day increased the importance candidates attached to doing well in the early contests in order to gain momentum for Super Tuesday.

Where candidates spent their time is one measure of the relative importance of Iowa, New Hampshire, and Super Tuesday states.<sup>18</sup> Simply counting the number of appearances candidates made on separate days leads to a striking realization: only Gore and Jackson spent more days down South than they did in Iowa and New Hampshire (Table 2). Every other candidate spent at least as much time in the two early states as in fourteen southern Super Tuesday states combined—as many as two (Dukakis) or three (Gephardt) to four (Simon) days in Iowa or New Hampshire for every day in the South.

TABLE 2  
Campaign Days in Iowa, New Hampshire,  
and the Southern Super Tuesday States

	IA <sup>a</sup>	NH <sup>b</sup>	IA & NH <sup>c</sup>	Southern and border states <sup>d</sup>			IA & NH/ South
				Nov 15 1987 <sup>e</sup>	Jan 15 1988 <sup>f</sup>	Mar 10 1988 <sup>g</sup>	
Babbitt	118	60	178	18	.. <sup>h</sup>	..	..
Dukakis	84	36	120	34	42	60	2.0
Gephardt	144	51	195	26	32	58	3.4
Gore	32	51	83	54	86	129	0.6
Hart <sup>i</sup>	18	22	40	..	2	..	..
Jackson	62	19	81	40	75	85	0.9
Simon	88	49	137	15	26	32	4.3
Bush	38	25	63	21	28	51	1.2
Dole	48	56	104	40	53	70	1.5
duPont	91	87	178	8	10	..	..
Haig	24	80	104	30	37	..	..
Kemp	69	83	152	20	24	..	..
Robertson	30	36	66	21	28	56	1.2

<sup>a</sup>The Iowa data are found in *USA Today*, 9 February 1988, p. 4A.

<sup>b</sup>The New Hampshire data are found in *USA Today*, 9 February 1988, p. 5A and in the campaign schedules in subsequent issues through 16 February.

<sup>c</sup>IA&NH refers to Iowa and New Hampshire data combined.

<sup>d</sup>Fourteen southern and border South states (excluding South Carolina), days of campaign appearances in the region since 1 July 1987.

<sup>e</sup>Data in this column found in Southern Legislative Conference release of 20 November 1987, days through 15 November 1987.

<sup>f</sup>Data in this column found in Southern Legislative Conference release of 2 February 1988, days through 15 January 1988.

<sup>g</sup>Data in this column found in Southern Legislative Conference release of 10 March 1988, days through 29 February 1988, updated through campaign staff contacts.

<sup>h</sup>.. indicates data are not available. Candidates withdrew as follows: Babbitt, 18 February; Dole, 29 March; duPont, 18 February; Gephardt, 28 March; Haig, 16 February; Hart, 11 March; and Kemp, 10 March. Campaigns were suspended by Simon on 7 April and Gore on 21 April.

<sup>i</sup>Since 15 December 1987.

<sup>18</sup>For comparable Iowa figures in earlier years, see Winebrenner, *The Iowa Precinct Caucuses*, especially p. 141 (data for 1984).

Southern hopes for greater attention from the candidates were often disappointed. For example, the Alabama Democratic party staged a presidential debate in January. Only three candidates would commit to come. The Louisiana Democratic party held a "Summit on Super Tuesday" in early January. Although all presidential candidates agreed to attend, only Gore did.

Democrats were not alone in being stood up. Over 1,000 Republican activists from across the South gathered in New Orleans for the Southern Republican Leadership Conference in early February. All Republican presidential candidates were committed to attend. Not one came. The timing (in the week between Iowa and New Hampshire) made the candidates reconsider. Speakers stressed that while Super Tuesday made southern states especially significant, and Republicans were being presented with a grand opportunity for party development, nevertheless—by the way, we're disappointed but we understand since we're all professionals here—none of our Republican presidential candidates can keep their commitment to be with us. Because the race had tightened up, the candidates could not spare the time from campaigning in New Hampshire.<sup>19</sup>

How candidates campaigned in the South led to some discontent. The size of Super Tuesday voting meant wholesale politicking replaced the retail politics of Iowa and New Hampshire.<sup>20</sup> As one journalist described it: "The three-week run-up to Super Tuesday had the feel of a mass airplane hijacking, as planeloads of desperate candidates and their journalistic hostages flew from tarmac to tarmac, stopping only to refuel and blink into television lights."<sup>21</sup> In the words of one campaign strategist, "Super Tuesday's a black hole. It eats up your money and energy. You break it into three components—Tarmac, Debates, Ad—and try to survive."<sup>22</sup>

Candidates did more than airport hops, but campaigning understandably took on the appearance of scrambling to be seen favorably in as many of the more than 150 Super Tuesday media markets as possible. Free media through news coverage was important, but not under the control of a candidate or his staff. Paid media required hefty finances.<sup>23</sup> Jackson's campaign reported that buying adequate advertising time on a single Dallas station for a week would easily run to \$300,000. They did not do it. Jackson spent only \$447,644 on Super Tuesday (he initially claimed \$100,000). Dukakis and Gore spent \$3 million and Gephardt spent \$1.5 million (Table

<sup>19</sup>Frank Fahrenkopf, Republican National Committee Chairman, remarks to the press, Southern Republican Leadership Conference, 12 February 1988.

<sup>20</sup>The size meant that those in some states felt slighted. For example, Maryland Governor William Donald Schaefer stated that Maryland was "lost in the shuffle" and should move its presidential primary back to May. Quoted in *USA Today*, 9 March 1988, p. 7A.

<sup>21</sup>Hendrik Hertzberg, "Campaign '88: The Wind Tunnel," *The New Republic*, 2 May 1988, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup>As quoted by Sandy Grady, "Super Tuesday Means Video Politics in 30-second Bites," *Nashville Banner*, 5 March 1988, p. A8.

<sup>23</sup>Richard L. Berke, "Dukakis Funds Mount as His Rivals Face Bills," *The New York Times*, 10 March 1988, p. 11.

3), principally on television advertising.<sup>24</sup> An editorial in *The New York Times* suggested that the day should have been spelled Super Tuesday.<sup>25</sup>

Where candidates spent their money corroborates the lingering importance of Iowa and New Hampshire relative to the Super Tuesday states (Table 3). Among Democrats, even Gore spent more money in New Hampshire than in any single Super Tuesday state with the exception of Texas. Dukakis (again, excepting Texas), Gephardt, Jackson, and Simon spent more in Iowa than in any Super Tuesday state. Among Republicans, Bush spent more in Florida, Dole in Illinois and Massachusetts, and Robertson in Texas than in any other state. Expressing expenditures as a percentage of Federal Election Commission state spending limits shows the same pattern. Bush, Dole, Kemp, and Robertson each spent over 90 percent of the limit in Iowa and New Hampshire, 60 percent was the next highest, and the remaining state figures ranged between 10 and 30 percent.<sup>26</sup>

Candidates spent more time in Iowa and New Hampshire than they did down South; the media also covered the two early events to a far greater extent. Consider news coverage of primaries and caucuses in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* (Table 4). Ironically, coverage of the Democratic nomination process in the southern and border states surpassed the coverage given to Iowa and New Hampshire combined in 1984, but not in 1988.<sup>27</sup> Within the South, the states varied in terms of news coverage received: South Carolina stands out for the Republicans as do Florida and Texas for the Democrats.

Coverage by the television networks mirrors the print media's emphasis on Iowa and New Hampshire. From early 1987 until the end of the primaries and caucuses, nomination contests in the southern states voting on Super Tuesday received 106 mentions on the evening news of the three major networks. The Iowa contest received 285, the New Hampshire contest 210. Including all states voting on Super Tuesday and non-state-specific mentions of Super Tuesday raises the total to 228—slightly ahead of New Hampshire but behind Iowa. Yet considering that more than 2,000 delegates were at stake

<sup>24</sup>Despite the seemingly large sums spent overall, individual states and stations felt slighted. For example, one report from Kentucky compared state spending to hold the special Super Tuesday presidential primaries (\$4.22 million) with what candidates spent in Kentucky (\$0.50 million) ["Super Tuesday To Cost State 8 and 1/2 Times More Than It Raised," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 27 April 1988, p. B1]. "Most of the major television stations in Louisville and Lexington budgeted three to four times more in campaign ad revenues than actually came in" (*Louisville Courier-Journal*, 8 March 1988, p. 1). For an overview of such Super Tuesday let-downs, see "Political TV Ad Race Off to Sluggish Start," *Broadcasting*, 14 March 1988, pp. 27-29.

<sup>25</sup>"The Shock of Super Tuesday," editorial, *The New York Times*, 10 March 1988, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup>"Presidential Primary Spending At \$200 Million Mark," Federal Election Commission Press Release, 18 August 1988, pp. 5-6. The FEC cautions that data for different campaigns may not be comparable since each campaign employs its own method for determining the distribution of state-by-state expenses. Some expenditures may not be allocated to any state, if they more closely relate to the campaign's "national" effort.

<sup>27</sup>Dukakis' expected win in his neighboring state of New Hampshire diminished the coverage that state's Democrats received, plus the defeat of Bush by Dole and Robertson in Iowa shifted the spotlight to the Republicans in New Hampshire, as Table 4 indicates.

TABLE 3  
Candidate Campaign Spending in Iowa, New Hampshire,  
and the Southern Super Tuesday States

	Democrats									
	Detakis		Gephardt		Gore		Jackson		Simon	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
IA	755,366	100	729,677	94	261,350	34	195,032	25	744,783	96
NH	438,437	95	344,045	75	434,401	94	72,892	16	440,220	95
ST Average <sup>a</sup>		13		7		12		2		1
AL	69,024	6	114,644	10	225,821	20	25,500	2	6,900	•
AK	101,966	16	49,780	8	123,092	19	14,500	2	17,987	3
FL	735,397	21	307,002	9	180,407	5	31,000	1	24,093	•
GA	131,463	8	142,049	9	237,953	14	44,851	3	29,149	2
KY	60,219	6	1,352	•	119,835	12	39,532	4	4,615	•
LA	26,287	2	79,813	7	73,632	6	28,000	2	4,475	•
MD	236,326	19	2,679	•	38,840	3	19,300	2	12,057	1
MS	4,514	•	4,769	•	89,214	13	22,300	3	4,000	•
MO	3,426	•	279,984	20	357	•	4,000	•	11,233	•
NC	344,904	20	22,605	1	353,343	20	72,151	4	59,496	3
OK	80,681	9	87,890	10	156,988	18	0	•	6,424	•
SC	40,011	4	9,471	1	113,206	12	40,510	4	200	•
TN	12,008	•	931	•	28,414	2	12,000	1	4,341	•
TX	1,054,462	24	441,151	10	935,520	21	73,500	2	52,992	1
VA	88,100	5	1,599	•	215,421	13	20,500	1	22,799	1
ST Total	2,988,788		1,545,719		2,892,043		447,644		260,761	

TABLE 3 (continued)

	Republicans								
	Bush		Dole		Kemp		Robertson		State limit
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	
IA	774,698	100	775,564	100	765,146	99	763,391	98	775,217
NH	481,449	104	469,288	102	425,968	92	430,902	93	461,000
ST Average <sup>a</sup>		17		16		2		16	
AL	87,460	8	216,278	20	17,137	2	191,115	17	1,093,861
AK	85,857	13	77,031	12	12,511	2	59,392	9	642,081
FL	1,118,464	33	303,753	9	13,745	•	683,085	20	3,436,847
GA	252,489	15	287,663	17	21,823	1	200,178	12	1,654,436
KY	115,120	11	88,869	9	1,063	•	83,529	8	1,007,192
LA	158,086	14	193,843	17	5,210	•	235,195	20	1,159,876
MID	115,174	9	260,124	21	1,574	•	37,438	3	1,257,608
MS	187,836	28	82,111	12	4,194	•	128,348	19	676,010
MO	307,643	22	424,358	30	5,259	•	85,666	6	1,399,227
NC	203,417	12	704,156	40	7,042	•	163,462	9	1,765,076
OK	180,560	21	305,930	35	5,613	•	133,045	15	877,375
SC	578,580	63	340,399	37	455,248	50	359,112	39	916,099
TN	116,050	9	267,541	20	383	•	159,583	12	1,329,155
TX	419,326	10	157,846	4	18,540	•	952,061	22	4,353,684
VA	54,046	3	75,329	5	4,635	•	297,292	18	1,638,947
ST Total	3,980,108		3,785,271		573,977		3,768,701		23,207,474

SOURCE: calculated from "Presidential Primary Spending at \$200 Million Mark," Federal Election Commission Press Release, 18 August 1988, pp. 5-6. NOTES: An asterisk represents less than 1 percent. In Iowa and New Hampshire Democrat Babbitt spent 83 and 48 percent of the state limits. Republicans duPont spent 79 and 96 percent of the limits and Haig spent 5 and 36 percent. South Carolina is included in this and subsequent tables although in 1988 the Republican primary occurred on March 5th and the Democratic caucus on March 12th.

<sup>a</sup>Expenditures as a percentage of Federal Election Commission state expenditure limits, averaged across southern and border states.

TABLE 4  
National Newspaper Coverage of Iowa, New Hampshire,  
and the Southern Super Tuesday States  
by Political Party, 1984 and 1988

	Percentage of New York Times and Washington Post Stories			
	1984 Dem	1988 Dem	1988 Rep	1988 Total
Iowa	9.04	14.77	23.36	17.97
New Hampshire	13.14	4.98	16.69	9.38
Southern Super Tuesday states	26.74	19.14	23.59	20.78
Alabama	3.25	1.40	.52	1.07
Arkansas	.42	.31	.52	.39
Florida	3.25	3.27	2.36	2.93
Georgia	3.39	1.87	1.31	1.66
Kentucky	.85	.78	.52	.68
Louisiana	2.12	1.09	1.05	1.07
Maryland	1.98	.62	.52	.59
Mississippi	1.13	.78	.52	.68
Missouri	1.13	.16	1.31	.59
North Carolina	1.27	2.02	2.36	2.14
Oklahoma	.85	.62	1.84	1.07
South Carolina	.71	.62	6.82	2.93
Tennessee	.85	.62	.00	.39
Texas	3.85	3.58	3.15	3.42
Virginia	1.69	1.40	.79	1.17
All other states	51.08	61.11	36.36	51.87
Total N	708	643	381	1024

SOURCE: David S. Castle, "Size, Sequence, and Super Tuesdays: The American States in the Presidential Nomination Process," unpublished paper, 1988, Table 1.

on Super Tuesday and only 130 were at stake in Iowa and New Hampshire, the emphasis on the early events is clear.<sup>28</sup>

If prime-time election night coverage by the national television networks is a principal criterion for whether Super Tuesday attracted increased attention to the South, Super Tuesday would seem, superficially, a success. ABC and CBS gave it two hours, NBC an hour—more than twice the combined coverage of Iowa and New Hampshire. Yet plans for prime-time coverage of Super Tuesday had initially called for 40 percent more coverage. Moreover, the twenty Super Tuesday states had a voter turnout twenty-five times greater than Iowa and New Hampshire combined. Tom Wicker said it best: the television networks covered the Iowa caucuses as if they were Creation and the

<sup>28</sup>S. Robert Lichter, Daniel Amundson, and Richard Noyes, *The Video Campaign: Network Coverage of the 1988 Primaries* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1988), p. 13.

New Hampshire primary as if it were the Second Coming.<sup>29</sup>

Enhancing southern influence on the Democratic presidential nomination was one objective behind Super Tuesday. The media treated Super Tuesday as a major event, but media coverage, candidate schedules, and campaign spending for 1988 do not indicate that Super Tuesday eclipsed Iowa and New Hampshire. Even without Super Tuesday, southern states had influence within the Democratic nomination process as is indicated by both parties scheduling the 1988 national conventions in the South and a growing agreement among Democrats that carrying southern states is critical for a Democratic presidential victory.

#### SUPER TUESDAY AND CENTRIST VOTERS

Consider first the question of overall participation rates. Did Super Tuesday increase voter turnout? Republican turnout set records in most states, while Democratic turnout was neither the disaster the Republicans desired nor the delight the designers intended (Table 5). Overall, voter turnout increased dramatically in the eight states that switched from caucuses to primaries. However, this compares apples and oranges because caucuses traditionally have low turnout. Turnout in presidential primaries, while lagging behind turnout for state and local election primaries, far outstrips the caucuses.<sup>30</sup>

Southern Super Tuesday states utilizing primary elections in 1980, 1984, and 1988 witnessed a more modest increase in voter participation. The average turnout for this group, figured as a percentage of voting-age population, varied from 19 percent in 1980—the year Alabama, Florida, and Georgia fielded the first, much more modest Super Tuesday—to 17 percent in 1984 and to 22 percent in 1988. This gain seems too trifling to notice, much less celebrate.<sup>31</sup>

The negative ads run prior to Super Tuesday led some observers to predict

<sup>29</sup>Tom Wicker, "The Carter Example," *The New York Times*, 11 March 1988, p. 27. Network coverage of Super Tuesday was not a crowd-pleaser: "Politics don't play well in prime time. Super Tuesday news specials—which pre-empted regular programming on all three major networks—spawned a 29 percent decrease in viewership. The combined network rating that night was a meager 32.8 ratings points, compared with 46.5 the week before (a ratings point represents 886,000 TV homes). No special won its time period—all were up against reruns—and viewers decreased significantly as time passed. . . . Says CBS Vice President of Marketing David Poltrack: 'I expect if we had kept with original plans of three hours of coverage we would have had the lowest rating and share in the history of network television'" (Brian Donlon, "Super Tuesday's TV Ratings Not So Super," *USA Today*, 11 March 1988, p. D1).

<sup>30</sup>Crotty and Jackson, *Presidential Primaries*, pp. 11-25; and David E. Price, *Bringing Back the Parties* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1984), pp. 205-213.

<sup>31</sup>James W. Davis notes that voter turnout in states holding presidential primaries between 1948 and 1968, before primaries acquired their later political significance, was about 27 percent of the voting-age population [*Presidential Primaries: Road to the White House* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1980), p. 142]. In competitive contests, Austin Ranney notes that turnout climbed to 39 percent ["Turnout and Representation in Presidential Primary Elections," *The American Political Science Review* 66 (March 1972): 23-24].

TABLE 5  
Presidential Primary Voter Turnout and Political Party Vote Share, Southern Super Tuesday States, 1980-1988

	1980				1984				1988					
	Primary vote <sup>a</sup>		Primary turnout <sup>b</sup>		Primary vote <sup>a</sup>		Primary turnout <sup>b</sup>		Primary vote <sup>a</sup>		Primary turnout <sup>b</sup>			
	#Dem	%Dem	#Rep	%Rep	#Dem	%Dem	#Rep	%Rep	#Dem	%Dem	#Rep	%Rep		
Alabama	237	57	211	43	16	428	-	-	15	406	66	214	34	21
Arkansas	448	-	-	-	28	1182	78	344	22	498	88	68	12	32
Florida <sup>d</sup>	1098	64	615	36	23	685	93	51	7	1273	59	900	41	23
Georgia	385	66	200	34	15	-	-	-	-	623	61	401	39	22
Kentucky <sup>d</sup>	240	72	95	28	13	319	95	17	5	319	72	121	28	16
Louisiana <sup>d</sup>	359	90	42	10	14	507	87	74	13	624	81	145	19	24
Maryland <sup>d</sup>	477	74	167	26	21	-	-	-	-	531	73	201	27	22
Mississippi	-	-	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	333	69	157	31	27
Missouri	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	534	57	400	43	24
N. Carolina <sup>d</sup>	737	81	168	19	21	961	-	-	21	680	71	274	29	19
Oklahoma <sup>d</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	393	63	209	35	25
S. Carolina	40 <sup>e</sup>	22	146	78	-	-	-	-	-	45 <sup>e</sup>	19	195	81	-
Tennessee	295	60	195	40	15	322	80	83	20	576	69	254	31	24
Texas	1377	72	527	28	19	-	-	-	-	1767	64	1015	36	23
Virginia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	367	61	235	39	13
Region <sup>f</sup>	5653	72	2220	28	19	4404	89	569	11	8904	66	4594	34	22

SOURCE: Compiled from Richard M. Scammon and Alice V. McGillivray, eds., *America Votes 16* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1984), pp. 37, 41, 59-60, 66-67; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Projections of the Population of Voting Age, for States: November 1988," *Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 1019* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1988); reports of the secretaries of state or state boards of elections, 1988. Alabama turnouts in 1988 are from the state parties.

<sup>a</sup>Number voting in thousands, e.g., 237,000 Democrats in Alabama for 1980.

<sup>b</sup>Primary turnout is based on voting-age population.

<sup>c</sup>A caucus rather than a primary election was held.

<sup>d</sup>States with party registration enabling the holding of closed primaries.

<sup>e</sup>Voter turnout for the region is based on the total votes cast in states where both major political parties held primary elections.

that voters would tune out rather than turn out.<sup>32</sup> Pervasive predictions of a Bush runaway probably reduced Republican voter turnout. The collapse of the Robertson candidacy may have had the same effect. "Still, if there was a winner of the Super Tuesday turnout battle, it was apathy. More than 75 percent of the voting-age population in the southern and border primary states did not vote at all."<sup>33</sup>

Republicans had great hopes for the open primary states in the South, but turnout in those states was hardly different from that in the closed primary states. Figured on the basis of voting-age population, closed primary states had 21.5 percent turnout, open primary states 22.1 percent. The partisan distribution of the vote was also similar: 65 percent of the voters in open primary states cast ballots in the Democratic presidential primary, 67 percent did so in the closed primary states.

Republicans did get higher turnout, but their hopes for even higher turnouts with massive crossovers did not materialize. Republicans wooed and won some voters, but further courting is required. In Louisiana, a closed primary state, recent registration gains were evident: the Louisiana Republican party alone witnessed a growth of 25,066 registrants (or 8 percent) in the four-month interval between the gubernatorial and Super Tuesday elections. Such gains must be viewed in the broader context of Republican growth in the South. In the six southern and border states that have voter registration by party, the Democratic share of voters registered by party slipped from 76 to 69 percent between 1980 and 1988.<sup>34</sup> Republicans have made headway, but Democrats remain dominant.

Although Republican presidential primary turnouts set records in many states, Republican voters were still outnumbered two to one by Democratic voters on Super Tuesday. The Republican share of the vote rose from 28 percent in 1980 to 34 percent in 1988. Bush swept the Republican primaries decisively, but his vote total was less, often far less, than the Democratic winner in every state except Florida and Texas. Despite gains in turnout, Republicans still have a long way to go in the South. Super Tuesday did not provide the vehicle for Republicans to pull even with the Democrats by achieving substantial, enduring political gains from a single event.

Turnout rose, but did Republicans or Democrats secure the support of the targeted middle? Consider crossover voting. Network exit polls indicated that crossover voting in the open primary states did not materialize in any significant sense. Only 5 percent of the voters in the Republican primaries considered themselves Democrats while only 6 percent of voters in Democratic primaries considered themselves Republicans.<sup>35</sup> Gore's candidacy, endorsed by about 800 Democratic officeholders and party officials (whose consti-

<sup>32</sup>Sandy Grady, "Super Tuesday Means Video Politics," p. A8.

<sup>33</sup>Rhodes Cook, "One Side Is Clearer, The Other Still Murky," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* 46 (12 March 1988): 646.

<sup>34</sup>Rhodes Cook, "March 8 Offers Clues to South's Political Soul," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* 46 (5 March 1988): 573.

<sup>35</sup>*The New York Times/CBS News Poll*, p. 2.



tents were the most likely to desert the Democrats), undoubtedly helped hold down Democratic crossovers.<sup>36</sup>

The significance of this low level of crossover voting is compounded by another characteristic of southern Republicans. Part of the problem Republicans have faced in building the party down South is that even some voters who think of themselves as Republicans support Democrats for state and local offices.<sup>37</sup> Thus, not only did Republicans fail to get the levels of crossover voting from Democrats that they would have liked, some of their own identifiers can be considered partisan "Trojan horses."

Although large numbers of Democrats did not spurn the party to take part in the Republican primary, those Democrats who did turn out were less conservative in 1988 than in 1984 (ABC exit poll data—Table 6). The comparisons that can be made are restricted to Alabama, Florida, and Georgia, but among these states the trend is evident. Admittedly, comparing 1988 with 1984 is comparing a year (1988) when both parties had presidential primary contests with a year when only Democrats had one (1984) and focusing on these three states does not deliver a regionwide perspective. Even so, 1984 was not a pleasing peak for southern Democrats who put together Super Tuesday in 1988 to make the presidential primary more attractive. Moreover, these three states constituted the southern Super Tuesday in 1980 and 1984.

Neither party registered turnout gains to the extent desired. Moreover, Republicans failed to secure Democratic crossovers and Democrats fell short of attracting more moderate voters into their primaries.

### SUPER TUESDAY AND MODERATE CANDIDATES

Many southern Democrats supported Super Tuesday in order to advantage moderate candidates who would move the national party toward a more centrist, more competitive position. Yet moderate candidates, such as former Governor Charles Robb and Senator Sam Nunn, never entered the fray, despite the existence of Super Tuesday.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Dick Kirschten, "The New South Vote," *National Journal*, 9 April 1988, p. 936. These endorsements resulted from recognition that Gore could attract voters who might otherwise be crossovers. As former Texas Governor Dolph Briscoe said when endorsing Gore: "It is my opinion that Senator Gore . . . will bring back into the Democratic party those who have been lost in elections in the past." Quoted in Terrence Stutz, "63 in Texas Endorse Gore," *The Dallas Morning News*, 13 January 1988, p. 6A.

<sup>37</sup>Harold W. Stanley, "Southern Partisan Changes: Dealignment, Realignment or Both?" *Journal of Politics* 50 (February 1988): 64-88; Charles D. Hadley and Susan E. Howell, "The Southern Split Ticket Voter, 1952-76: Republican Conversion or Democratic Decline?" *Party Politics in the South*, eds. Robert P. Steed, Laurence W. Moreland, and Tod A. Baker (New York: Praeger, 1980), pp. 127-149.

<sup>38</sup>Gore's quest for the presidency had more to do with strong support among fund-raisers than the existence of Super Tuesday. (He had initially declared he would not be a candidate.) Gore settled on a Super Tuesday strategy in the fall of 1987, several months after entering the race: Gore "adopted his Super Tuesday strategy in early October after finding his campaign in Iowa and New Hampshire going nowhere" (Donna Blanton, "Gore Sees Logic in Betting All on Super Tuesday," *Orlando Sentinel*, 1 February 1988).

TABLE 6  
Ideology of Democratic Primary Voters, 1984 and 1988

State	Date	"Regardless of the party you may favor, do you lean more toward the liberal side or the conservative side politically?"		
		Liberal	In-between	Conservative
Alabama	3/13/84	22%	37%	41%
	3/ 8/88	32	39	29
	Change	+ 10	+ 2	- 12
Florida	3/13/84	30	37	33
	3/ 8/88	30	41	29
	Change	0	+ 4	- 4
Georgia	3/13/84	23	40	37
	3/ 8/88	32	41	27
	Change	+ 9	+ 1	- 10

SOURCE: ABC exit polls.

One Super Tuesday reformer initially claimed that after Iowa and New Hampshire, there would be one conservative candidate and one liberal candidate (Jackson may not have registered on the mental map of this partisan), and voting in the South would advantage the conservative candidate. Iowa and New Hampshire did not cooperate, of course. The joint results helped send Paul Simon back to Illinois and elevated Gephardt. As former Democratic National Committee political director Ann Lewis described the dynamics before Super Tuesday: "This is not a sudden death playoff, but a game of musical chairs. There will probably be one more chair gone after Super Tuesday."<sup>39</sup> Gephardt lost his chair. Although close to the center, Gephardt was mortally wounded on Super Tuesday and later folded his campaign.

Gore, a self-styled "raging moderate,"<sup>40</sup> did come alive on Super Tuesday, but his chief competition was Gephardt, another Democratic candidate capable of claiming moderation.<sup>41</sup> If the Gore and Gephardt votes are combined, this combination would place first in Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas in addition to the six states Gore or Gephardt carried as individuals. A Super

<sup>39</sup>Quoted in Cook, "March 8 Offers Clues," 574.

<sup>40</sup>Gore's shifts prior to Super Tuesday were not all in a more moderate direction. Gore had moved in a more conservative direction on military spending in the fall of 1987. As Super Tuesday approached, this military nationalism was less emphasized in favor of a more populist stance, an economic nationalism that was at the core of Gephardt's appeal in Iowa. Whether this shift helped account for late shifts in support to Gore for Super Tuesday or Gore's late media blitz with a basically acceptable message mattered more, must await further analysis of survey data.

<sup>41</sup>Gore's jump-start, if something like Super Tuesday exists in 1992, could encourage several moderates to copy his strategy, dividing the vote with disastrous results for their candidacies.

Tuesday result in which the moderate candidate carried nine primary states, Dukakis four, and Jackson three, would have produced far more momentum for the moderate than did the actual results in which Gephardt carried a state and Dukakis, Gore, and Jackson each carried five.

Gore's actual success on Super Tuesday did not provide a lasting lift. He had run as a centrist and "jump-started" his campaign on Super Tuesday but he ran out of gas in subsequent contests, finally suspending his campaign six weeks after Super Tuesday. Dukakis and Jackson, despite their evident strength and appeal, were not the centrists the architects of Super Tuesday had in mind.

### CONCLUSION

Super Tuesday was hyped so high that it was bound to disappoint. Some supporters declared that it would nominate the next president.<sup>42</sup> It did, but Republican George Bush was not the candidate the designers had in mind. Actually, the "Super Tuesday experiment . . . produced results that were considerably less spectacular than the ballyhoo that preceded it. . . . After all the dust settled . . . there was little in the way of earth-shaking change."<sup>43</sup> Super Tuesday did contribute mightily toward settling the nomination in the Republican party. Yet Republicans reacting to Super Tuesday by relishing the "political boo-boo" of the century<sup>44</sup> or a "political tar-baby"<sup>45</sup> seems more hype and hope than reality, although certain results were what the Democrats wanted to avoid rather than accept. Iowa and New Hampshire remained dominant in 1988, but Iowa's days as a trend-setter appear numbered. Although voter turnout increased somewhat, Super Tuesday neither settled the Democratic nomination nor gave meaningful momentum to the more moderate candidates.

Did Super Tuesday work? There are strong grounds for doubt, but boasting by those who brought it about may help do it in. Insofar as Super Tuesday seems to have been a successful regional primary and the reformers seem satisfied, other regions will consider copying it. Just as southern Democrats could not lay an exclusive claim to 8 March in 1988, the place and prominence of southern delegate selection for 1992 will turn on how the nonsouthern states arrange their primaries and caucuses.

Within the South, some support has surfaced for southern states to split into subregional primaries, spreading the delegate selection over a three- or four-week period. Partisans in some of the smaller states felt dwarfed by

<sup>42</sup>One of the founders of Super Tuesday, Georgia House Speaker Tom Murphy, said "I truly believe when Super Tuesday is over you're going to know who the next president will be" (Southern Legislative Conference press release, 20 November 1987).

<sup>43</sup>Dick Kirschten, "The New South Vote," *National Journal*, 9 April 1988, p. 936.

<sup>44</sup>Lee Atwater as quoted in Michael Oreskes, "GOP Gains Seen in South's Turnout," *The New York Times*, 10 March 1988, p. 12.

<sup>45</sup>Steve French, Alabama Republican Political Director, as quoted in *Montgomery Advertiser and Alabama Journal*, 13 March 1988, p. B1.

Florida and Texas and neglected by the candidates. Some commentators raised the specter of a national primary, not always critically. Georgia House Speaker Tom Murphy, a principal backer of Super Tuesday, stated "I think something approaching a national primary is coming, and I think it would work."<sup>46</sup> Super Tuesday as it appeared in 1988 seems unlikely to reappear in the exact same form in 1992.

<sup>46</sup>Quoted in *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 10 March 1988. See Bartels, *Presidential Primaries*, pp. 277-282; Crotty and Jackson, *Presidential Primaries*, pp. 220-233; and Davis, *Presidential Primaries*, pp. 254-275, for discussions of national and regional primaries.