

N.C. Free Enterprise Foundation: Impact Of Cantor Defeat On 6th District GOP Runoff

By Administrator

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RALEIGH, (SGRToday.com) - U.S. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor's defeat in the Republican primary in Virginia last week has already had an impact on North Carolina, according to analysis by the North Carolina Free Enterprise Foundation.

The nonpartisan group says issues that pundits believed help defeat Cantor and send his Tea Party opponent, Dave Brat, to victory are being raised in the 6th District GOP runoff between Phil Berger, Jr. and Mark Walker. The nonpartisan group's analysis is below, as detailed in a news release issued Monday.

'The Berger campaign last week unleashed what it referred to as a 'major media buy' for ads on conservative radio stations contending Walker supports amnesty for illegal aliens (an issue some pundits point to as impacting the Cantor-Brat race), and highlighting the fact that as a district attorney, Berger knows 'first hand the effect of illegal immigration: the overcrowding of our jails, illegals feeding off our tax dollars, and jeopardizing public safety.'

For its part, the Walker campaign shot out two press releases following Cantor's defeat - one reinforcing that Walker is against amnesty for illegal immigrants and touting his endorsement from Alamance County Sheriff Terry Johnson, and the other attempting to link Berger to Cantor through a political consultant connected to both campaigns (some political analysts felt Cantor was in part a victim of an anti-establishment mood among voters).

Berger, who is the son of NC Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger Sr., received 34.27% of the first primary vote, to Walker's 25.20%. Conventional wisdom holds that, all other factors being equal, first primary winners are generally favored to go on and win runoffs and Berger certainly appears to be in a stronger position than Walker in terms of campaign resources available for advertising and other voter contact over the coming weeks.

But Walker's second place showing surprised many political observers, coming about with an intensive grassroots effort (Walker's been campaigning for some time now, having launched his campaign in March 2013, prior to incumbent Rep. Howard Coble's announcement that he would not seek another term in 2014), including lots of door-to-door voter contact and traveling about the district in a brightly painted campaign bus.

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Walker has also secured the endorsement of four Republican primary rivals: Mike Causey, Don Webb, Bruce VonCannon, and Charlie Southerland. Combined these candidates received just over 20% of the first primary vote.

In what is expected to be a miniscule turnout of Republican voters on July 15th to select who will face Democrat Laura Fjeld in November, the winning candidate is most likely to be the one that turns out their supporters most effectively.

Conversations with local political observers over the past few weeks reveal most feel Berger is likely to prevail but many suspect the runoff has the potential to be close, so we'll be keeping an eye on it over the coming weeks."