



Tea Party Claims Victory in Alvarez Recall ...Uh, Wait, What?

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Tea Party Revolt: Miami Mayor Recalled

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Fox News declares a Tea Party Revolt

"Tea Party Revolt: Miami Mayor Recalled," proclaims [Fox News' Fox Nation website](#), while other Tea Party segments of the world wide web take glee in the ousting of Carlos Alvarez. True some of the politics involved share similarities: raising property taxes was the deed that caused Norman Braman to organize the recall election in the first place. Though, to paint this as a victory for the Tea Party movement is a bit of a stretch.

"Has South Beach gone Tea Party?" [wonders conservative website Pajamas Media](#):

Folks, Alvarez didn't get the boot in some tinpot Tea Party town in up the Florida panhandle. This is Miami-Dade, where President Obama won 58.1% of the vote in 2008. This is Miami-Dade, home of the super-liberal congresscritter Debbie Wasserman Schultz. This is Miami-Dade, where Democrats outnumber Republicans by almost 50%.

Well, first off those facts are just wrong. Most of Wasserman Schultz's district is in Broward County. Most of Miami-Dade is represented by three Republican congress people, and Democrats only outnumber Republican by about 30 percent (and who actually usually shows up to vote paints a narrower story).

Meanwhile, the libertarian Cato Institute [paints the victory](#) as the work of "the real Tea Party." Hot Air [warns](#) RINOs (Republicans in Name Only) to heed the warning. Meanwhile, [crazy message board FreeRepublic](#) also took glee in the news. This most likely won't be the last we hear of Tea Partiers pointing to Alvarez's defeat as their victory.

So, was this really a Tea Party victory?

In spirit ...maybe ...vaguely. It's true that the recall was financed by Norman Braman, a Republican anti-tax activist. Don't forget though that the effort to recall Natacha Seijas (which originally also targeted other county commissioners) was run by Vanessa Brito and her VoiceMiami PAC. Brito is an openly gay political activist who also champions many liberal causes.

To say that voters went to the booth yesterday with pure thoughts of anti-tax and anti-union ideology is a stretch. That may have played a part for some, but what we really saw here is two politicians who were horrible at communication and public relations.

There isn't a single person in Miami who doesn't automatically associate Natacha Seijas with words like "vile," "nasty," "corrupt," or "rude."

For Alvarez, it was more the fact that he drove a luxury BMW on the county dime and gave huge raises to his inner circle than the fact he rose property taxes alone. They lost control of their public image a long time ago. There's a reason that efforts to recall other commissioners who voted for the property tax hike were unsuccessful: people in their district actually liked them.

To hear voters talk about Alvarez's downfall they more often cite his PR mishaps than his political ones.

"It's a farce what he has done," Luis Diaz, an employee at the airport, [told The New York Times](#). "He needed to raise taxes to keep the county running, but he also had to give raises to his friends."

"I saw him on TV with a car from here to there," Hialeah resident Edelmira Triana said in the same article. "And he's giving money to his own staff and raising taxes and he's got that enormous car. He's living the good life."

You can also look at [Braman's own words after the recall](#). They weren't filled with Tea Party rhetoric, but rather very basic reforms to county government that, much like the underlying reasons for the recall, cut across ideology.

The real test of whether this was a victory for Tea Party politics will come in who (assuming they get the chance) voters will replace Alvarez with. Will anti-tax, anti-union rhetoric play big in a special election? We'll see.

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Cane 17 hours ago

Excellent rebuttal. I wanted Alvarez and Siejas out and I never ever want anything to do with the Tea Party. Fox News spreading lies again.



FauxNews 17 hours ago

Stupid Fox News. I'm a bleeding heart liberal and wanted them gone.

Crimepays121 14 hours ago

88%.

3/17/2011

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Maybe Braman will start a Campaign to Recall Tomas Regalado and Marc Sarnoff.

Braman hates elected officials who show no respect for the taxpayers.



cam 12 hours ago

Found myself nodding along with this article. Fine there are some things that are in common, but politics in South Florida aren't as easily divisible along Repub/Dem lines as national news would want.



Hasbeens 4 hours ago

Who cares about facts dude?!? Gotta rabble rouse the base!!!