



Pat McCrory Returns

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Back in 2015, with the 2016 election fast approaching, and multiple contenders for the Republican nomination to the presidency as the hot topic of every day, I got my start in political commentary. If there are any of you from that start still clinging to the life raft that has become our republic, you may remember some of my earlier work, as well as the once-awesome space that I called my home.

In the midst of my push against the rise of wretched Trumpism, I did not forget that states and local government can stand as a bulwark against the creeping oppression of an out-of-control federal administration. I pushed for solidly conservative local candidates, as well as North Carolina's amazing then-governor, Pat McCrory.

To my dismay, all my words, all my efforts were in vain. Trumpism washed over our nation, and that same dark tide took out the best governor the Tarheel state has had in a very long time. North Carolina went purple in 2016, with the presidency going to [alleged] Republican Trump, but the gubernatorial race going to droopy Democrat, Roy Cooper.

I won't rehash all that could have gone wrong with the McCrory campaign that year, other than to say that several counties (*I'm looking at you, Mecklenburg and New Hanover*) held grudges over non-issues, and ultimately, cut off their own noses to spite their face. There were Republican holdouts that wanted to punish McCrory, and then, of course, as I heard with maddening regularity, he wasn't as sufficiently obsequious to the gilded toad as he should have been, making his "conservatism" suspect to the budding Branch Trumpidian cult movement.

I had hoped that in 2020, McCrory would reemerge and run again. I think he could have won back the state. Believe me, four years of Roy Cooper were more than enough. He did not, however, and left the Republican nomination to former Lieutenant Governor Dan Forest.

Forest ran a lackluster, largely forgettable campaign. Cooper ran on not being a Republican or Trump, and given the exhaustion of polite society to the Trump cult's antics, he sailed to an easy victory, with Forest putting up little to no resistance.

The one bright spot for the state is Mark Robinson, who took Forest's spot as lieutenant governor. He's a firecracker! We'll discuss him more, at a later date.

So why am I talking about former NC Governor Pat McCrory, after my long hiatus?

Because he's back!

In April of this year, McCrory, who has spent the last four years hosting a radio sports show out of Charlotte, NC, announced that he would be in the running for U.S. Senate. He's stepping up, in an effort to win the seat of current Senator Richard Burr, who plans to retire in 2022.

He has some competition, namely in former state Representative Mark Walker, as well as Congressman Ted Budd.

The task at hand for McCrory will be to overcome the cesspool of Trumpism that has created a greasy stain over the top of the GOP waters. Is it too late for a solid, proven conservative to stand a chance, without bowing to kiss the ring of the former president?

It's a fair question. Donald Trump has already tossed his endorsement to Ted Budd (which should make him suspect to actual conservatives in the state).

That's not to say Budd doesn't have a level of conservative cred. A check of his Liberty score gives him 92% on the issues. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean as much as it used to, in light of the Trump era. Those of us who remember how it used to be have seen a lot of once-reliable conservative voices crumble to irrelevance, by making Trump their lord.

Some of us left the party, rather than be associated with such a blatantly corrupt, unrecognizable entity. That doesn't mean there aren't still candidates that deserve our attention – or support. The wise move for those who have rejected the poison of partisanship is to judge each candidate, no matter the party, on their merits.

Looking back, I think the one thing that stands out most about McCrory is his refusal to be bullied by the federal government.

When the Obama administration attempted to blackmail North Carolina over the bathroom bill maelstrom, McCrory didn't flinch. He was right to plant his feet on an issue that was, ultimately, to protect the well-being of his state's families. Before the DOJ, led at that time by Loretta Lynch, could sue to have our public bathrooms and locker rooms flung open to mentally-ill, possibly criminal interlopers, McCrory sued first!

Also, with McCrory in leadership, a once failing state (thanks to Democrat Governor Bev Perdue), became an economic powerhouse! The Tarheel state was named over and over again, by various economists, as the state to watch, as far as economic growth.

The Cato Institute ranked Pat McCrory as the second leading governor in the nation, based on his sound economic policies.

By making the tough choices with the state budget, McCrory and his team were able to cancel a debt of \$2.5 billion to federal unemployment, within his first 2 years in office. Overall, he took a deficit of over \$270 million and left the state with over a \$400 million surplus.

And jobs... SO MANY JOBS began flocking to the state!

He left Democrat Roy Cooper with a very comfortable start.

Knowing this, why didn't Donald Trump endorse him? Well, because, as has been proven so often, his only loyalty is to his sycophants, and not the proven, effective leaders.

When you look at endorsements, McCrory is lagging far behind his competitors for the GOP nomination.

Budd, as I mentioned, has the endorsement of Trump, his bootlicks, Mark Meadows and Gym Jordan (and no, that wasn't a typo), Club for Growth, and Gun Owners of America.

Mark Walker has the support of former Arkansas Governor (and all-around embarrassment) Mike Huckabee, Senators James Lankford (Oklahoma) and Tim Scott (South Carolina), as well as North Carolina Representative (and insane secessionist) Madison Cawthorn.

McCrory has a single endorsement, and that's from the senator whose seat he hopes to win: Richard Burr.

With only a lone voice backing him, what chance does he have?

Well, he's got name recognition working for him, and that, to date, has kept him in a double-digit polling lead over his closest competitor, Budd.

He's managed to also remain competitive, as far as raising campaign funds.

Could this mean that the lure of damnable Trumpism is waning? Are people tired of the constant whining and "ME! ME! ME!" of the Trump era?

I'm not convinced, but I'm hopeful that a McCrory nomination to U.S. Senate could be a sign of the turning tide.

As for the Democrats, they have their own cast of players in the running for the seat, but with President Biden's polling numbers in a slump, largely due to his handling of the removal of troops from Afghanistan (a mess he was left to clean up, due to his predecessor's deal with the Taliban), as well as the all Covid/all-the-time narrative, they may not fair so well in the midterms.

For now, I'm just glad to see Pat McCrory back in the game. He got a raw deal in 2016, and the state has paid a price for his absence. This is another chance for North Carolina Republicans and Independents to get it right.

