

## Principles and NY-23: Are Republicans and conservatives returning to their roots?

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Roger Pilon of the Cato Institute summarizes that battle over pragmatism and principle that has taken place inside the Republican Party over the race in NY-23:

*Goldwater won [the 1964] intra-party battle, of course, then lost an election all but foreordained by the Kennedy assassination. And with Goldwater's victory for the soul of the Republican Party, the parties were at last distinguished by their principles, even if a remnant of Rockefeller Republicans, like the two Bushes, remained to muddy the waters.*

*The NY 23 situation captures this perfectly. Nominated not in a primary but by a few party officials, Dede Scozzafava's indifference to Republican Party principles was no better illustrated than by her decision, when it became clear how badly she was losing, not simply to remove herself from the race but to endorse the Democratic nominee — in an apparent **back-room deal** with state and national Democrats. We'll doubtless know in time just what promises were made for that endorsement. But it reeks already of the lust for power over principle: Do whatever it takes to stay in the political game.*

*It's impossible to predict the outcome of this election, of course. Some of Scozzafava's loyalists will probably follow her, while others will be moved by a sense of betrayal to go the other way. The larger question, however, is whether we are going to have two significantly different parties in this nation — or simply two parties vying for power, with barely a dime's worth of difference between them. The Obama administration's lust for power, making Bush look like a piker, has brought the Goldwater/Reagan revolution back to life. But the [Wall Street Journal's sober editorial](#) this morning got it exactly right: Whether this revival returns the GOP to first principles or leads to internecine ruin "will depend on how GOP leaders and conservative activists respond." Both could do worse than look to Ronald Reagan for guidance.*

That nails it.

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